



WOLF RESTORES CONFIDENCE ALONG THE LINE

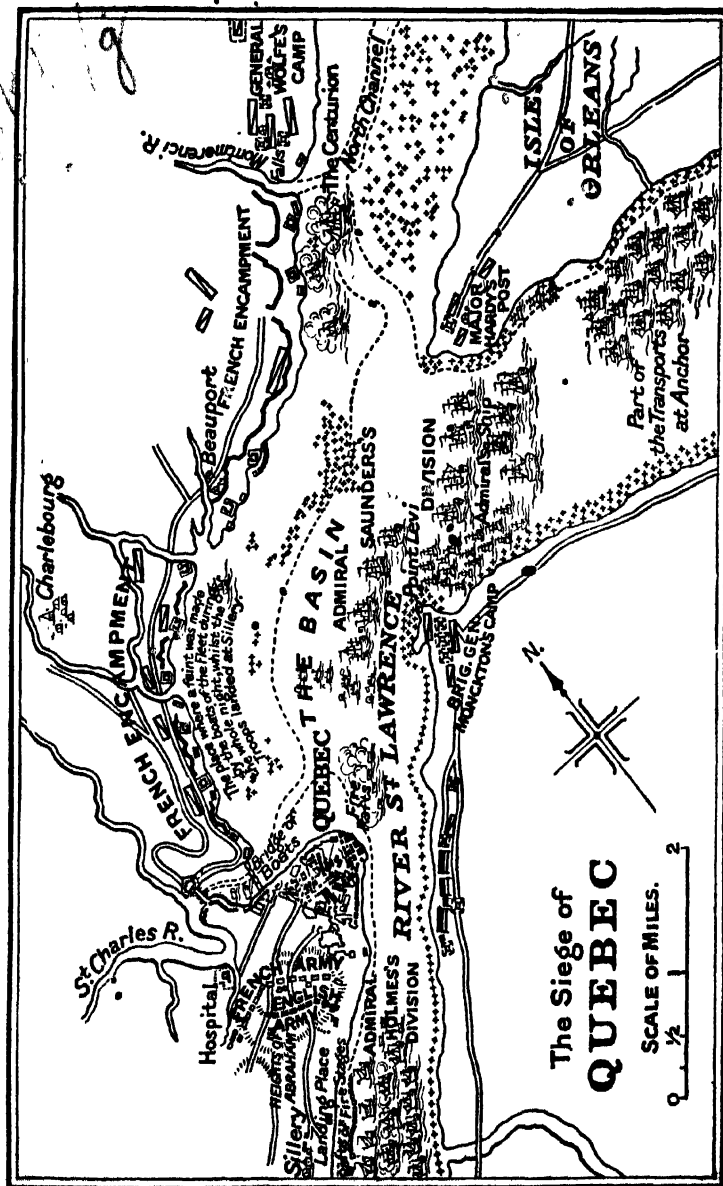
THE ROMANCE
OF THE WORLD

Edited by Herbert Strang

THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA



LONDON
HENRY FROWDE &
HODDER & STOUGHTON



CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE FIRST CONQUEST OF QUÉBEC	1
(From " <i>Pioneers of France in the New World</i> ," by Francis Parkman)	
COUNT FRONTENAC'S SUCCESSFUL DEFENCE	9
(From " <i>The Conquest of Canada</i> ," by G. Warburton)	
FIGHTING THE IROQUOIS: THE HEROINE OF VERCHÈRES	21
(From " <i>Count Frontenac</i> ," by Francis Parkman)	
THE OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1759: FORT NIAGARA AND CROWN POINT	37
(From " <i>The History of Canada</i> ," by John MacMullen)	
THE SIEGE OF LOUISBOURG	49
(From Robert Wright's " <i>Life of Wolfe</i> ")	
TICONDEROGA	60
(From " <i>The Conquest of Canada</i> ," by G. Warburton)	
THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM	71
(From " <i>The Conquest of Canada</i> ," by G. Warburton)	
FIGHTING AFTER THE FALL OF QUEBEC	88
(From " <i>The History of Canada</i> ," by John MacMullen)	
THE INDIAN WAR	95
(From " <i>The Conspiracy of Pontiac</i> ," by Francis Parkman)	
THE AMERICAN INVASION, 1812-13	148
(From " <i>The History of Canada</i> ," by John MacMullen)	

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

WOLFE RESTORES CONFIDENCE ALONG THE LINE	<i>To face page</i> (see page 81) <i>Frontispiece</i>
THE DEFENDER OF VERCHÈRE	34
PONTIAC ADDRESSING THE GARRISON OF DETROIT	112
THE DEATH OF GENERAL BROCK	158

THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

THE FIRST CONQUEST OF QUEBEC

SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN, the governor of New France, as Canada was then called, had received his commission in 1613, and had ruled the country with tolerable success until 1627. In that year the relations between the colonists and the mother country became strained, the former, strange to say, suffering greatly from want of provisions, and the company at home being callous to everything but their own profits. Cardinal Richelieu, the all-powerful minister of Louis XIII, on Champlain's representation dissolved the old fur company, and formed a new one, generally known as the Hundred Associates—with himself at their head. It was proposed to send out two or three hundred artisans of various trades, at once, and four hundred thousand additional colonists within fifteen years. Only Roman Catholic natives of France were to be allowed to enter the colony, and the company was to have a monopoly of the trade.

In furtherance of these plans, four armed vessels, convoying a fleet of eighteen transports laden with emigrants and stores, together with one hundred and thirty-five cannons, left France in 1628 for Quebec. But the expedition never reached the St. Lawrence. For the English Government, having espoused the cause of the

2 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

French Huguenots, with whom Richelieu was at war, had sent out a fleet under David Kirk, to attack the French foreign possessions. Kirk entered upon his duties with special enthusiasm. He was animated by religious zeal, and by feelings of revenge against those who had driven his family from France. He captured the transports and convoy and conveyed them to England. Then he sailed to Canada, to the great consternation of the French colonists, who were eagerly expecting assistance from France. This action of Kirk long rankled in the minds of the rulers of France, and partly explains their hostility in after years to Radisson, who had married Mary Kirk, a relative of the admiral.

THE attempts of Sir William Alexander¹ to colonize Acadia had of late turned attention in England towards the New World; and on the breaking out of the war an enterprise was set on foot, under the auspices of that singular personage, to seize on the French possessions in North America. At its head was a subject of France, David Kirk, a Calvinist of Dieppe. With him were his brothers, Louis and Thomas Kirk; and many Huguenot refugees were among the crews. Having been expelled from New France as settlers, the persecuted sect were returning as enemies. One Captain Michel, "a furious Calvinist," is said to have instigated the attempt, acting, it is affirmed, under the influence of one of his former employers.

¹ Afterwards Earl of Stirling, a poet and statesman. He was tutor to Prince Henry, son of James I, and in 1621 was given jurisdiction over Acadia.

Meanwhile, the famished tenants of Quebec were eagerly waiting the expected succour. Daily they gazed beyond Point Levi and along the channels of Orleans, in the vain hope of seeing the approaching sails. At length, on the 9th of July, two men, worn with struggling through forests and over torrents, crossed the St. Charles and mounted the rock. They were from the outpost at Cape Tourmente, and brought news that, according to the report of Indians, six large vessels lay in the harbour of Tadoussac. The friar Le Caron was at Quebec, and, with a brother Récollet, he set forth in a canoe to gain further intelligence. As the two missionary scouts were paddling along the borders of the Island of Orleans, they met two canoes advancing in hot haste, manned by Indians, who with shouts and gestures warned them to turn back.

The friars, however, waited till the canoes came up, when they beheld a man lying disabled at the bottom of one of them, his moustaches burned by the flash of the musket which had wounded him. He proved to be Foucher, who commanded at Cape Tourmente. On that morning—such was the story of the fugitives—twenty men had landed at that post from a small fishing-vessel. Being to all appearances French, they were hospitably received; but no sooner had they entered the houses than they began to pillage and burn all before them, killing the cattle, wounding the commandant, and making several prisoners.

The character of the fleet at Tadoussac was now

4 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

sufficiently clear. Quebec was incapable of defence. Only fifty pounds of gunpowder were left in the magazine; and the fort was so wretchedly constructed that, a few days before, two towers of the main building had fallen. Champlain, however, assigned to each man his post, and waited the result. On the next afternoon a boat was seen issuing from behind Point of Orleans and hovering hesitatingly about the mouth of the St. Charles. On being challenged, the men on board proved to be Basque fishermen, lately captured by the English, and now sent by Kirk unwilling messengers to Champlain. Climbing the steep pathway to the fort, they delivered their letter, a summons, couched in terms of great courtesy, to surrender Quebec. There was no hope but in courage. A bold front must supply the lack of batteries and ramparts; and Champlain dismissed the Basques with a reply, in which, with equal courtesy, he expressed his determination to hold his position to the last.

All now stood on the watch, hourly expecting the enemy; when, instead of the hostile squadron, a small boat crept into sight, and one Desdames, with ten Frenchmen, landed at the storehouses. He brought stirring news. The French commander, Roquemont, had dispatched him to tell Champlain that the ships of the Hundred Associates were ascending the St. Lawrence with reinforcements and supplies of all kinds. But on his way Desdames had seen an ominous sight—the English squadron standing under full sail out of Tadoussac, and steering downwards as if to

intercept the advancing succour. He had only escaped them by dragging his boat up the beach and hiding it; and scarcely were they out of sight, when the booming of cannon told him that the fight was begun.

Racked with suspense, the starving tenants of Quebec waited the result; but they waited in vain. No white sail moved athwart the green solitudes of Orleans. Neither friend nor foe appeared; and it was not till long afterwards that Indians brought them the tidings that Roquemont's crowded transports had been overpowered, and all the supplies destined to relieve their miseries sunk in the St. Lawrence or seized by the victorious English. Kirk, however, deceived by the bold attitude of Champlain, had been too discreet to attack Quebec, and after his victory employed himself in cruising for French fishing-vessels along the borders of the Gulf. Meanwhile the suffering at Quebec increased daily. Somewhat less than a hundred men, women and children were cooped up in the fort, subsisting on a meagre pittance of pease and Indian corn. The garden of the Héberts, the only thrifty settlers, was ransacked for every root or seed that could afford nutriment. Months wore on, and in the spring the distress had risen to such a pitch that Champlain had well-nigh resolved to leave to the women, children and sick, the little food that remained, and with the able-bodied men invade the Iroquois, seize one of their villages, fortify himself in it, and sustain his followers on the buried stores of maize with which the strong-

6 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

holds of these provident savages, were always furnished.

Seven ounces of pounded pease were now the daily food of each; and, at the end of May, even this failed. Men, women and children betook themselves to the woods, gathering acorns and grubbing up roots. Those of the plant called Solomon's seal were most in request. Some joined the Hurons or the Algonquins; some wandered towards the Abenakis of Maine; some descended in a boat to Gaspé, trusting to meet a French fishing-vessel. There was scarcely one who would not have hailed the English as deliverers. But the English had sailed home with their booty, and the season was so late that there was little prospect of their return. Forgotten alike by friends and foes, Quebec was on the verge of extinction.

On the morning of the 19th of July, an Indian renowned as a fisher of eels, who had built his hut on the St. Charles, hard by the new dwelling of the Jesuits, came, with his usual imperturbability of visage, to Champlain. He had just discovered three ships sailing up the south channel of Orleans. Champlain was alone. All his followers were absent, fishing or searching for roots. At about ten o'clock his servant appeared with four small bags of roots, and the tidings that he had seen the three ships a league off, behind Point Levi. As man after man hastened in, Champlain ordered the starved and ragged band, sixteen in all, to their posts, whence, with hungry eyes, they watched the English vessels anchoring in the

basin below, and a boat, with a white flag, moving towards the shore. A young officer landed with a summons to surrender. The terms of capitulation were at length settled. The French were to be conveyed to their own country; and each soldier was allowed to take with him furs to the value of twenty crowns. On this some murmuring rose, several of those who had gone to the Hurons having lately returned with peltry of no small value. Their complaints were vain, and on the 20th of July, amid the roar of cannon from the ships, Louis Kirk, the admiral's brother, landed at the head of his soldiers, and planted the cross of St. George where the followers of Wolfe again planted it a hundred and thirty years later. After inspecting the worthless fort, he repaired to the houses of the Récollets and Jesuits on the St. Charles. He treated the former with great courtesy, but displayed against the latter a violent aversion, expressing his regret that he could not have begun his operations by battering their house about their ears. The inhabitants had no cause to complain of him. He urged the widow and family of the settler Hébert, the patriarch, as he has been styled, of New France, to remain and enjoy the fruits of their industry under English allegiance; and, as beggary in France was the alternative, his offer was accepted.

Champlain, bereft of his command, grew restless, and begged to be sent to Tadoussac, where the admiral, David Kirk, lay with his main squadron, having sent his brothers Louis and Thomas to seize Quebec. Accordingly, Champlain, with the

Jesuits, embarking with Thomas Kirk, descended the river. Off Mal Bay a strange sail was seen. As she approached, she proved to be a French ship. In fact she was on her way to Quebec with supplies which, if earlier sent, would have saved the place. She had passed the admiral's squadron in a fog; but here her good fortune ceased. Thomas Kirk bore down on her, and the cannonade began. The fight was hot and doubtful; but at length the French struck, and Kirk sailed into Tadoussac with his prize. Here lay his brother, the admiral, with five armed ships. Though born in Dieppe, he was Scotch on his father's side, and had been a wine merchant at Bordeaux. His two voyages to Canada were private adventures; and, though he had captured nineteen fishing-vessels, besides Roquemont's eighteen transports and other prizes, the result had not answered his hopes. His mood, therefore, was far from benign, especially as he feared, that, owing to the declaration of peace, he would be forced to disgorge a part of his booty; yet, excepting the Jesuits, he treated his captives with courtesy, and often amused himself with shooting larks on shore in company with Champlain.

Having finished their carousings, which were profuse, and their trade with the Indians, which was not lucrative, the English steered down the St. Lawrence. Kirk feared greatly a meeting with Razilly, a naval officer of distinction, who was to have sailed from France with a strong force to succour Quebec; but peace having been proclaimed, the expedition had been limited to two

FRONTENAC'S SUCCESSFUL DEFENCE 9

ships under Captain Daniel. Thus Kirk, wilfully ignoring the treaty of peace, was left to pursue his depredations unmolested. Daniel, however, though too weak to cope with him, achieved a signal exploit. On the island of Cape Breton, near the site of Louisbourg, he found an English fort, built two months before, under the auspices, doubtless, of Sir William Alexander. Daniel, regarding it as a bold encroachment on French territory, stormed it at the head of his pikemen, entered sword in hand, and took it with all its defenders.

Meanwhile, Kirk, with his prisoners, was crossing the Atlantic. His squadron at length reached Plymouth, whence Champlain set forth for London. Here he had an interview with the French ambassador, who, at his instance, gained from the king a promise that, in pursuance of the terms of the treaty concluded in the previous April, New France should be restored to the French Crown.

COUNT FRONTENAC'S SUCCESSFUL DEFENCE

By the treaty of St. Germain in 1632, the whole of Canada, Cape Breton and Acadie were restored to the French, and Champlain resumed the governorship, which, however, he held but for a short time. He died in 1634, on Christmas day, at the castle of St. Louis, which he had built for himself on the summit of the cliffs of Quebec.

During the next half-century none of the

10 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

governors of New France proved worthy successors of Champlain. Scarcely a hundred Europeans were added to the colony during the five years following that great man's death; and when, in 1662, the charter of the Hundred Associates was annulled, the total foreign population did not exceed two thousand. The reason of this slow growth was that the direction of affairs was under the control of the Jesuits, who devoted their energies to the conversion of the Indians, and paid little attention to colonization. From 1632 to 1682 they were indefatigable in their exertions on behalf of the savages, and are justly considered the pioneers of civilization in the Far West.

Count de Frontenac, who was appointed governor in 1672, proved himself, after Champlain, the most distinguished of the early French officials. Under his administration the Jesuit fathers Joliet, Marquette, La Salle and Hennepin explored the Mississippi River, and the Great West. But the savagery of the Indians, especially of the Iroquois, appeared to be untamable, and they waged such persistent and fierce war against the colonists that they almost realized their great hope of expelling the "palefaces" from the country. The Jesuit fathers suffered almost incredible hardships and torture, but they never faltered in their zeal, although the results of their labours were insignificant. To add to the trouble of the colonists, war broke out again between England and France in 1689, and whenever the mother countries attacked each other, their children, scattered over the world, dutifully followed their example.

FRONTENAC'S SUCCESSFUL DEFENCE 11

BUT now, the greatest danger that had ever yet menaced the power of France upon the American continent hung over the Canadian shores. The men of New England were at last aroused to activity by the constant inroads and cruel depredations of their northern neighbours, and, in April 1690, dispatched a small squadron from Boston, which took possession of Port Royal and all the province of Acadia. In a month the expedition returned, with sufficient plunder to repay its cost. Meanwhile, the British settlers deputed six commissioners to meet at New York in council for their defence. On the 1st of May, 1690, these deputies assembled, and promptly determined to set an expedition on foot for the invasion of Canada. Levies of eight hundred men were ordered for the purpose, the contingents of the several states fixed, and general rules appointed for the organization of their army. A fast-sailing vessel was dispatched to England with strong representation of the defenceless state of the British colonies, and with an earnest appeal for aid in the projected invasion of New France; they desired that ammunition and other warlike stores might be supplied to their militia for the attempt by land, and that a fleet of English frigates should be directed up the river St. Lawrence to co-operate with the colonial force. But at that time England was too much weakened by the unhealed wounds of domestic strife to afford any assistance to her American children, and they were thrown altogether on their own resources.

12 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

New York and New England boldly determined, unaided, to prosecute their original plans against Canada. General Winthrop, with eight hundred men, marched by the way of Lake Champlain, on the shores of which he was to have met five hundred of the Iroquois warriors; but, through some unaccountable jealousy, only a small portion of the politic savages came to the place of muster. Other disappointments also combined to paralyse the British force: the Indians had failed to provide more than half the number of canoes necessary for the transport of the troops across the lake, and the contractor of the army had imprudently neglected to supply sufficient provisions. No alternative remained for Winthrop, but to fall back upon Albany for subsistence.

The naval expedition against Quebec was assembled in Nantasket Road, near Boston, and consisted of thirty-five vessels of various sizes, the largest being a 44-gun frigate. Nearly two thousand troops were embarked in this squadron, and the chief command was confided by the people of New England to their distinguished countryman Sir William Phips, a man of humble birth, whose own genius and merit had won for him honour, power, and universal esteem. The direction of the fleet was given to Captain Gregory Sugers. The necessary preparations were not completed, and the fleet did not get under weigh till the season was far advanced; contrary winds caused a still further delay; however, several French posts on the shores of Newfoundland and of the Lower St. Lawrence were captured without op-

position, and the British force arrived at Tadoussac on the Saguenay before authentic tidings of the approaching danger had reached Quebec.

When the brave old Frontenac learned from his scouts that Winthrop's corps had retreated, and that Canada was no longer threatened by an enemy from the landward side, he hastened to the post of honour at Quebec, while by his orders M. de Ramsey and M. de Callières assembled the hardy militia of Three Rivers and the adjoining settlements to reinforce him with all possible dispatch. The governor found that Major Provost, who commanded at Quebec before his arrival, had made vigorous preparations to receive the invaders; it was only necessary, therefore, to continue the works and confirm the orders given by his worthy deputy. A party under the command of M. de Longueuil was sent down the river to observe the motions of the British, and if possible to prevent their landing. At the same time two canoes were dispatched by the shallow channel north of the Island of Orleans to seek for some ships with supplies, which were daily expected from France, and to warn them of the presence of the hostile fleet.

The Count de Frontenac continued the preparations for defence with unwearied industry. The regular soldiers and militia were alike constantly employed upon the works, till in a short time Quebec was tolerably secure from the chances of a sudden assault. Lines of strong palisades, here and there armed with small batteries, were formed round the crown of the lofty headland,

14 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

and the gates of the city were barricaded with massive beams of timber and casks filled with earth. A number of cannon were mounted on advantageous positions, and a large windmill of solid masonry was fitted up as a cavalier.¹

At daylight, on the 5th of October, the white sails of the British fleet were seen rounding the headland of Point Levi, and crowding to the northern shore of the river, near the village of Beauport; at about ten o'clock they dropped anchor, lowered their canvas, and swung round with the receding tide. There they remained inactive till the following morning. On the 6th Sir William Phips sent a haughty summons to the French chief, demanding an unconditional surrender in the name of King William of England, and concluding with this imperious sentence: "Your answer positive in an hour, returned with your own trumpet with the return of mine, is required upon the peril that will ensue."

The British officer who bore the summons was led blindfold through the town and ushered into the presence of Count Frontenac in the council-room of the castle of Quebec. The bishop, the intendant, and all the principal officers of the Government surrounded the proud old noble. "Read your message," said he. The Englishman read it, and when he had finished, laid his watch upon the table with these words: "It is now ten; I await your answer for one hour." The council started from their seats, surprised out of their dignity by a burst of sudden anger. The Count

¹ i. e. an elevated support for the artillery.

paused for a time ere he could restrain his rage sufficiently to speak, and then replied, "I do not acknowledge King William, and I well know that the Prince of Orange is an usurper, who has violated the most sacred rights of blood and religion . . . who wishes to persuade the nation that he is the saviour of England and the defender of the faith, though he has violated the laws and privileges of the kingdom, and overturned the Church of England: this conduct the Divine Justice, to which Phips appeals, will one day severely punish."

"The British officer, unmoved by the storm of indignation which his message had aroused, desired that this fierce reply should be rendered to him in writing for the satisfaction of his chief. "I will answer your master by the mouth of my cannon," replied the angry Frenchman, "that he may learn that a man of my rank is not to be summoned in this manner." Thus ended the laconic conference.

On the return of the messenger Sir William Phips called a council of war; it was determined at once to attack the city. At noon, on the 8th, thirteen hundred men were embarked in the boats of the squadron, under the command of Major Walley, and landed without opposition at La Canardière, a little to the east of the river St. Charles. While the main body was being formed on the muddy shore, four companies pushed on towards the town in skirmishing order to clear the front; they had scarcely begun the ascent of the sloping banks when a sharp fire was

Uttara para Jaikrishna Public Library

Accn. No. 1044.....Date..... 5.6.95

poured upon them by three hundred of the Canadian militia posted among the rocks and bushes on either flank, and in a small hamlet to the right. Some of the British winced under this unexpected volley, fired and fell back, but the officers, with prompt resolution, gave the order to charge, and themselves gallantly led the way; the soldiers followed at a rapid pace, and speedily cleared the ground. Major Walley then advanced with his whole force to the St. Charles river, still, however, severely harassed by dropping shots from the active light troops of the French; there he bivouacked for the night, while the enemy retreated into the garrison.

Towards evening of the same day the four largest vessels of Phips's squadron moved boldly up the river, and anchored close against the town. They opened a spirited but ineffectual fire; their shot, directed principally against the lofty eminence of the Upper Town, fell almost harmless, while a vigorous cannonade from the numerous guns of the fortress replied with overwhelming power. When night interrupted the strife, the British ships had suffered severely, their rigging was torn by the hostile shot, and the crews had lost many of their best men. By the first light of morning, however, Phips renewed the action with pertinacious courage, but with no better success. About noon the contest became evidently hopeless to the stubborn assailants; they weighed anchor, and, with the receding tide, floated their crippled vessels down the stream beyond the reach of the enemy's fire.

The British troops under Major Walley, although placed in battle array at daylight, remained inactive through some unaccountable delay, while the enemy's attention was diverted by the combat with Phips's squadron. At length, about noon, they moved upon the formidable stronghold along the left bank of the river St. Charles. Some allied savages plunged into the bush in front to clear the advance, a line of skirmishers protected either flank, and six field-pieces accompanied the march of the main body. After having proceeded for some time without molestation, they were suddenly and fiercely assailed by two hundred Canadian volunteers under M. de Longueuil; the Indians were at once swept away, the skirmishers overpowered, and the British column itself was forced back by their gallant charge. Walley, however, drew up his reserve in some brushwood a little in the rear, and finally compelled the enemy to retreat. During this smart action M. de Frontenac, with three battalions, placed himself upon the opposite bank of the river, in support of the volunteers, but showed no disposition to cross the stream. That night the English troops—harassed, depressed, diminished in numbers, and scantily supplied—again bivouacked upon the marshy banks of the stream; a severe frost, for which they were but ill prepared, chilled the weary limbs of the soldiers, and enhanced their sufferings.

On the 10th Walley once more advanced upon the French positions, in the hope of breaching their palisades by the fire of his field-pieces, but this attempt was altogether unsuccessful. His

18 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

flanking parties fell into ambuscades, and were very severely handled, and his main body was checked and finally repulsed by a heavy fire from a fortified house on a commanding position, which he had ventured to attack. Utterly dispirited by this failure, the British fell back in some confusion to the landing-place, yielding up in one hour what they had so hardly won. That night many of the soldiers strove to force their way into the boats, and order was with great difficulty restored; the next day they were harassed by a continual skirmish; had it not been for the gallant conduct of "Captain March, who had a good company and made the enemy give back," the confusion would probably have been irretrievable. When darkness put an end to the fire on both sides, the English troops received orders to embark in the boats, half a regiment at a time. But all order was soon lost, four times as many as the boats could sustain crowded down at once to the beach, rushed into the water and pressed on board. The sailors were even forced to throw some of these panic-stricken men into the river, lest all should sink together. The noise and confusion increased every moment, despite the utmost exertions of the officers, and daylight had already revealed the dangerous posture of affairs before the embarkation was completed. The guns were abandoned, with some valuable stores and ammunition. Had the French displayed, in following up their advantages, any portion of the energy and skill which had been so conspicuous in their successful defence, the

British detachment must infallibly have been either captured or totally destroyed.

Sir William Phips, having failed by sea and land, resolved to withdraw from the disastrous conflict. After several ineffectual attempts to recover the guns and stores which Major Walley had been forced to abandon, he weighed anchor and descended the St. Lawrence to a place about nine miles distant from Quebec, whence he sent to the Count de Frontenac to negotiate for an exchange of prisoners. Humbled and disappointed, damaged in fortune and reputation, the English chief sailed from the scene of his defeat; but misfortune had not yet ceased to follow him, for he left the shattered wrecks of no less than nine of his ships among the dangerous shoals of the St. Lawrence.

Great, indeed, was the joy and triumph of the French when the British fleet disappeared from the beautiful basin of Quebec. With a proud heart the gallant old Count de Frontenac penned the dispatch which told his royal master of the victory. He failed not to dwell upon the distinguished merit of the colonial militia, by whose loyalty and courage the arms of France had been crowned with success. In grateful memory of this brave defence the French king caused a medal to be struck, bearing the inscription, "*Francia in novo orbe victrix : Kebeca liberata.—A.D. MDCXC.*" In the lower town a church was built by the inhabitants to celebrate their deliverance from the British invaders, and dedicated to "*Notre Dame de la Victoire.*"

20 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

By the treaty of Ryswick, in 1697, England and France made a mutual restitution of conquests. Frontenac died next year, and was mourned as "the father of the people, and the preserver of the country." He was succeeded by De Callières, who smoked the pipe of peace with the Iroquois in 1701, and freed New France from its greatest danger. After four years of peace England joined the enemies of France in the War of the Spanish Succession, which, of course, involved the colonies in hostilities, during which the English, French and Indians seemed to vie with each other in bloodthirstiness. Colonels Church and Wainwright made unsuccessful expeditions into Acadia in retaliation of French and Indian raids on the New England states.

The conquest of Canada was then seriously planned by the English colonists, but a home squadron, on which success depended, was recalled for service off Portugal, and nothing could be done until 1710. In that year Colonel Nicholson captured Port Royal, which was renamed Annapolis Royal in honour of Queen Anne and has retained the name ever since.

Next year the English Government made a serious attempt to conquer Canada, but failed through the incapacity of the commanders, Admiral Walker and Colonel Hill. The triumphant French dedicated the church they had built to commemorate the defeat of Phips to "Notre Dame de la Victoire." After these failures the English gave up for fifty years all hope of conquering the North-west, and of getting the fur trade of that region into their hands. But in 1713 Louis XIV, humbled by Marlborough's victories, signed the treaty of Utrecht, and ceded to Great

Britain Acadia, Newfoundland and the Hudson Bay territory, which have never passed out of her hands.

FIGHTING THE IROQUOIS: THE HEROINE OF VERCHÈRES

THE most powerful of the natives with whom the early European settlers came into contact formed the confederacy of "the Five Nations," who had their dwelling around the great lakes. According to legend, this confederacy was founded by a mythical hero whose name Longfellow has transformed into Hiawatha. The name Iroquois, by which they are best known, was derived by the French from *hiro*, "I have spoken," with which word they concluded their harangues, and *kowé*, an exclamation denoting sorrow or joy, according as the word was accentuated. Each tribe was divided into clans or families, having a name derived from the animal world. A rude picture of this formed the totem, or coat-of-arms, of the clan, and was put over the doors of their huts, and tattooed on the limbs of its members. Each tribe was governed by its own council of sachems and chiefs of inferior rank, elected by the clans, and supreme in all matters relating to the community.

In the virtues of the Indians, such as charity and hospitality, as well as in their vices, the Iroquois were pre-eminent. Their stoicism and endurance were heroic, but their savage ferocity and cruelty inspired general terror. They were relentless in war, and have been aptly described as the

22 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

Scourge of God upon the other tribes, although they could muster no more than three thousand warriors. They had no special discipline in their warlike expeditions, and depended for success on surprises and furious onslaughts. Their patience and resources were exhausted by a siege. Their treachery equalled their bravery, and their greatest delight was to tomahawk sleeping foes, and return home with many scalps. The other tribes took no precautions against such surprises, but relied for safety on the protection of their manitous, or guardian spirits.

The religious opinions of the Iroquois, like those of the other tribes, were of a very hazy description. They believed in innumerable mysterious agencies, and they pictured the hereafter as a land of shadows, in which man, as a shadow, would continue his ordinary avocations.

ONE of Phips's officers, charged with the exchange of prisoners at Quebec, said as he took his leave, "We shall make you another visit in the spring;" and a French officer returned, with martial courtesy, "We shall have the honour of meeting you before that time." Neither side made good its threat, for both were too weak and too poor. No more war parties were sent that winter to ravage the English border; for neither blankets, clothing, ammunition nor food could be spared. The fields had lain untilled over half Canada; and though four ships had arrived with supplies, twice as many had been captured or driven back by English cruisers in the gulf. The troops could not be kept together, and they were quartered for

subsistence, upon the settlers, themselves half famished.

Spring came at length, and brought with it the swallows, the bluebirds, and the Iroquois. They rarely came in winter, when the trees and bushes had no leaves to hide them, and their movements were betrayed by the track of their snowshoes; but they were always to be expected at the time of sowing and harvest, when they could do most mischief. During April about eight hundred of them, gathering from their winter hunting grounds, encamped at the mouth of the Ottawa, whence they detached parties to ravage the settlements. A large band fell upon Point aux Trembles, below Montreal, burned some thirty houses, and killed as many of the inmates as could not escape. Another band attacked the Mission of the Mountain, just behind the town, and captured thirty-five of the Indian converts in broad daylight. Others prowled among the deserted farms on both shores of the St. Lawrence; while the inhabitants remained pent in their stockade forts, with misery in the present and starvation in the future.

Troops and militia were not wanting. The difficulty was to find provisions enough to enable them to keep the field. By begging from house to house, getting here a biscuit and there a morsel of bacon, enough was collected to supply a considerable party for a number of days; and about a hundred and twenty soldiers and Canadians went out under Vaudreuil to hunt the hunters of men. Long impunity had made the Iroquois

so careless that they were easily found. A band of about forty had made their quarters at a house near the fort at Repentigny, and here the French scouts discovered them early in the night.

Vaudreuil and his men were in canoes. They lay quiet until one o'clock, then landed, and noiselessly approached the spot. Some of the Iroquois were in the house, the rest lay asleep on the ground before it. The French crept towards them, and by one close volley killed them all. Their comrades within sprang up in dismay. Three rushed out and were shot; the others stood on their defence, fired from windows and loopholes, and killed six or seven of the French, who presently succeeded in setting fire to the house, which was thatched with straw. Young François de Bienville, one of the sons of Charles Le Moyne, rushed up to a window, shouted his name like an Indian warrior, fired on the savages within, and was instantly shot dead. The flames rose till surrounding objects were bright as day. The Iroquois, driven to desperation, burst out like tigers and tried to break through their assailants. Only one succeeded. Of his companions, some were shot, five were knocked down and captured, and the rest driven back into the house, where they perished in the fire.

For weeks the upper part of the colony was infested by wolfish bands prowling around the forts, which they rarely ventured to attack. At length help came. A squadron from France, strong enough to beat off the New England privateers, which blockaded the St. Lawrence, arrived at

Quebec with men and supplies; and a strong force was dispatched to break up the Iroquois camp at the Ottawa. The enemy vanished at its approach; and the suffering farmers had a brief respite, which enabled them to sow their crops, when suddenly a fresh alarm was sounded from Sorel to Montreal, and again the settlers ran to their forts for refuge.

Since the futile effort of the year before, the English of New York had fought only by deputy, and contented themselves with hounding on the Iroquois against the common enemy. These savage allies at length lost patience, and charged their white neighbours with laziness and fear. "You say to us, 'Keep the French in perpetual alarm.' Why don't you say, 'We will keep the French in perpetual alarm'?" It was clear that something must be done, or New York would be left to fight her battles alone. A war party was therefore formed at Albany, and the Indians were invited to join it. Major Peter Schuyler took command; and his force consisted of two hundred and sixty-six men, of whom a hundred and twenty were English and Dutch, and the rest Mohawks and Wolves or Mohicans. He advanced to a point on the Richelieu, ten miles above Fort Chambly, and, leaving his canoes under a strong guard, marched towards La Prairie de la Madeleine, opposite Montreal.

Scouts had brought warning of his approach; and Callières, the local governor, crossed the St. Lawrence and encamped at La Prairie with seven or eight hundred men. Here he remained for a

week, attacked by fever and helpless in bed. The fort stood a few rods from the river. Two battalions of regulars lay on a field to the right, and the Canadians and Indians were bivouacked on the left, between the fort and a small stream, near which was a windmill. On the evening of the 10th of August a drizzling rain began to fall, and the Canadians thought more of seeking shelter than of keeping watch. They were, moreover, well supplied with brandy, and used it freely. At an hour before dawn the sentry at the mill descried objects like the shadows of men silently advancing along the borders of the stream. They were Schuyler's vanguard. The soldier cried "Qui vive?" There was no answer. He fired his musket and ran into the mill. Schuyler's men rushed in a body upon the Canadian camp, drove its occupants into the fort, and killed some of the Indian allies, who lay under their canoes on the adjacent strand.

The regulars on the other side of the fort, roused by the noise, sprang to arms and hastened to the spot. They were met by a volley which laid some fifty of them on the ground and drove back the rest in disorder. They rallied and attacked again, on which Schuyler, greatly outnumbered, withdrew his men to a neighbouring ravine, where he once more repulsed his assailants, and, as he declares, drove them into the fort with great loss.

Tried by the standard of partisan war, Schuyler's raid had been a success. He had inflicted great harm and suffered little; but the affair was not yet ended.

A day or two before, Valrenne, an officer of birth and ability, had been sent to Chambly with about one hundred and sixty troops and Canadians, a body of Huron and Iroquois converts, and a band of Algonquins from the Ottawa. His orders were to let the English pass, and then place himself in their rear to cut them off from their canoes. His scouts had discovered their advance, and on the morning of the attack he set his force in motion and advanced six or seven miles towards La Prairie on the path by which Schuyler was retreating. The country was buried in forests. At about nine o'clock, the scouts of the hostile parties met each other, and their war whoops gave the alarm. Valrenne instantly took possession of a ridge of ground that crossed the way of the approaching English. Two large trees had fallen along the crest of the acclivity, and behind these the French crouched, in a triple row, well hidden by bushes and thick standing trunks. The English, underrating the strength of their enemy, and ignorant of his exact position, charged impetuously, and were sent reeling back by a close and deadly volley. They repeated the attack with still greater fury, and dislodged the French from their ambuscade. Then ensued a fight which Frontenac declares to have been the most hot and stubborn ever known in Canada. The object of Schuyler was to break through the French and reach his canoes; the object of Valrenne was to drive him back upon the superior force at La Prairie. The cautious tactics of the bush were forgotten. Three times the combatants

28 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

became mingled together, firing breast to breast and scorching each other's shirts by the flash of their guns. In the midst of the tumult, Valrenne was perfectly cool, directing his men with admirable vigour and address, and barring Schuyler's retreat for more than an hour. At length the French were driven from the path.

The work of fortifying the vital points of the colony, Quebec, Three Rivers, and Montreal, received constant stimulus from the alarms of attack, and, above all, from a groundless report that ten thousand "Bostonnais" had sailed for Quebec. The sessions of the council were suspended, and the councillors seized pick and spade. The old defences of the colony were constructed on a new plan, made by the great engineer Vauban. The settlers were mustered together from a distance of twenty leagues, and compelled to labour, with little or no pay, till a line of solid earthworks enclosed Quebec from Cape Diamond to the St. Charles.

The river Ottawa was the main artery of Canada, and to stop it was to stop the flow of her life blood. The Iroquois knew this, and their constant effort was to close it so completely that the annual supply of beaver skins would be prevented from passing and the colony be compelled to live on credit. It was their habit to spend the latter part of the winter in hunting among the forests between the Ottawa and the upper St. Lawrence, and then, when the ice broke up, to move in large bands to the banks of the former stream, and lie in ambush at the Chaudière,

the Long Saut,, or other favourable points, to waylay the passing canoes. On the other hand, it was the constant effort of Frontenac to drive them off and keep the river open; an almost impossible task. Many conflicts, great and small, took place with various results; but in spite of every effort the Iroquois' blockade was maintained more than two years. The story of one of the expeditions made by the French in this quarter will show the hardships of the service and the moral and physical vigour which it demanded.

Early in February three hundred men under Dorvilliers were sent by Frontenac to surprise the Iroquois in their hunting grounds. When they were a few days on their march, their leader scalded his foot by the upsetting of a kettle at their encampment near Lake St. Francis, and the command fell on a youth named Beaucour, an officer of regulars accomplished as an engineer, and known for his polished wit. The march through the snow-clogged forest was so terrible that the men lost heart. Hands and feet were frozen; some of the Indians refused to proceed, and many of the Canadians lagged behind. Shots were heard, showing that the enemy were not far off; but cold, hunger and fatigue had overcome the courage of the pursuers, and the young commander saw his followers on the point of deserting him. He called them together and harangued them in terms so animating that they caught his spirit and again pushed on. For four hours more they followed the tracks of the Iroquois snowshoes till they found the savages in their bivouac, set

upon them and killed or captured nearly all. There was a French slave amongst them, scarcely distinguishable from his owners. It was an officer named La Plante, taken at La Chine three years before. "He would have been killed like his masters, if he had not cried out with all his might, 'Miséricorde, sauvez-moi, je suis français.'"

The brunt of the war fell on the upper half of the colony. The country about Montreal, and for nearly a hundred miles below it, was easily accessible to the Iroquois by the routes of Lake Champlain and the upper St. Lawrence; while below Three Rivers the settlements were tolerably safe from their incursions and were exposed to attack solely from the English of New England, who could molest them only by sailing up from the gulf in force. Hence the settlers remained on their farms and followed their usual occupations, except when Frontenac drafted them for war-parties. Above Three Rivers their condition was wholly different. A traveller passing through this part of Canada would have found the houses empty. Here and there he would have seen all the inhabitants of a parish labouring in a field together, watched by sentinels and generally guarded by a squad of regulars. When one field was tilled they passed to the next, and this communal process was repeated when the harvest was ripe. At night they took refuge in the fort, that is to say, in a cluster of log cabins surrounded by a palisade.

Many incidents of this troubled time are preserved, but none of them are so well worth the

record as the defence of the fort at Verchères by the young daughter of the seignior. Many years later, the Marquis de Beauharnais, governor of Canada, caused the story to be written down from the recital of the heroine herself. Verchères was on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, about twenty miles below Montreal. A strong block-house stood outside the fort, and was connected with it by a covered way. On the morning of the 22nd of October, the inhabitants were at work in the fields, and nobody was left in the place but two soldiers, two boys, an old man of eighty and a number of women and children. The seignior, formerly an officer of the regiment of Carignan, was on duty at Quebec; his wife was at Montreal; and their daughter Madeleine, fourteen years of age, was at the landing-place not far from the gate of the fort, with a hired man named Laviolette. Suddenly she heard firing from the direction where the settlers were at work, and an instant after Laviolette cried out, "Run, mademoiselle, run! here come the Iroquois!" She turned, and saw forty or fifty of them at the distance of a pistol shot. "I ran for the fort. The Iroquois who chased after me, seeing that they could not catch me alive before I reached the gate, stopped and fired at me. The bullets whistled about my ears and made the time seem very long. As soon as I was near enough to be heard I cried out, 'To arms! to arms!' hoping that somebody would come out and help me; but it was of no use. The two soldiers in the fort were so scared that they had hidden in

the blockhouse. At the gate I found two women crying for their husbands who had just been killed. I made them go in and then shut the gate. I next thought what I could do to save myself and the few people with me. I went to inspect the fort and found that several palisades had fallen down and left openings by which the enemy could easily get in. I ordered them to be set up again, and helped to carry them myself. When the breaches were stopped I went to the blockhouse where the ammunition was kept, and here I found the two soldiers, one hiding in a corner and the other with a lighted match in his hand. 'What are you going to do with that match?' I asked. He answered, 'Light the powder and blow us all up.' 'You are a miserable coward,' said I; 'go out of this place.' I spoke so resolutely that he obeyed. I then threw off my bonnet, and after putting on a hat and taking a gun I said to my two brothers, 'Let us fight to the death. We are fighting for our country and our religion. Remember that our father has taught you that gentlemen are born to shed their blood for the service of God and the King.'

The boys, who were twelve and ten years old, aided by the soldiers, whom her words had inspired with some little courage, began to fire from the loopholes upon the Iroquois, who, ignorant of the weakness of the garrison, showed their usual reluctance to attack a fortified place, and occupied themselves with chasing and butchering the people in the neighbouring fields. Madeleine ordered a cannon to be fired, partly to deter the

enemy from an assault and partly to warn some of the soldiers who were hunting at a distance. The women and children in the fort cried and screamed without ceasing. She ordered them to stop, lest their terror should encourage the Indians. A canoe was presently seen approaching the landing-place. It was a settler named Fontaine trying to reach the fort with his family. The Iroquois were still near, and Madeleine feared that the new-comers would be killed if something were not done to aid them. She appealed to the soldiers, but their courage was not equal to the attempt; on which, as she declares, after leaving Laviolette to keep watch at the gate, she herself went alone to the landing-place. "I thought that the savages would suppose it to be a ruse to draw them towards the fort in order to make a sortie upon them. They did suppose so, and thus I was able to save the Fontaine family. When they were all landed I made them march before me in full sight of the enemy. We put so bold a face on it that they thought they had more to fear than we. Strengthened by this reinforcement, I ordered that the enemy should be fired on whenever they showed themselves.

"After sunset a violent north-east wind began to blow, accompanied with snow and hail, which told us that we should have a terrible night. The Iroquois were all this time lurking about us, and I judged by their movements that instead of being deterred by the storm they would climb into the fort under cover of darkness. I assembled all my troops, that is to say six persons, and spoke

to them thus: 'God has saved us to-day from the hands of our enemies, but we must take care not to fall into their snares to-night. As for me, I want you to see that I am not afraid. I will take charge of the fort with an old man of eighty and another who never fired a gun, and you, Pierre Fontaine, with La Bonte and Gachet (our two soldiers) will go to the blockhouse with the women and children, because that is the strongest place, and if I am taken don't surrender, even if I am cut to pieces and burned before your eyes. The enemy cannot hurt you in the blockhouse if you make the least show of fight.' I placed my two young brothers on two of the bastions, the old man on the third, and I took the fourth; and all night, in spite of the wind, snow and hail, the cries of 'All's well' were kept up from the blockhouse to the fort and from the fort to the blockhouse. One would have thought that the place was full of soldiers. The Iroquois thought so and were completely deceived, as they confessed afterwards to Monsieur de Callières, whom they told that they had held a council to make a plan for capturing the fort in the night, but had done nothing because so constant a watch was kept.

"About one in the morning the sentinel on the bastion by the gate called out, 'Mademoiselle, I hear something.' I went to him to find what it was, and by the help of the snow which covered the ground I could see through the darkness a number of cattle, the miserable remnant that the Iroquois had left us. The others wanted to open the gate and let them in, but I answered, 'God forbid.



THE DEEpest OF VICHÈRE'S

You don't know all the tricks of the savages. They are no doubt following the cattle, covered with skins of beasts, so as to get into the fort if we are simple enough to open the gate for them.' Nevertheless, after taking every precaution I thought we might open it without risk. I made my brothers stand ready with their guns cocked in case of surprise, and so we let in the cattle.

"At last the daylight came again, and as the darkness disappeared our anxieties seemed to disappear with it. Everybody took courage except Mademoiselle¹ Marguerite, wife of the Sieur Fontaine, who, being extremely timid, as all Parisian women are, asked her husband to carry her to another fort. He said, 'I will never abandon this fort while Mademoiselle Madelon (Madeleine) is here.' I answered him that I would never abandon it; that I would rather die than give it up to the enemy, and that it was of the greatest importance that they should never get possession of any French fort, because if they got one they would think they could get others, and would grow more bold and presumptuous than ever. I may say with truth that I did not eat or sleep for twice twenty-four hours. I did not go once into my father's house, but kept always on the bastion, or went to the blockhouse to see how the people there were behaving. I always kept a cheerful and smiling face, and encouraged my little company with the hope of speedy succour.

¹ In those days the title even of married women not belonging to the nobility.

“We were a week in constant alarm, with the enemy always about us. At last Monsieur de la Monnerie, a lieutenant sent by Monsieur de Callières, arrived in the night with forty men. As he did not know whether the fort was taken or not he approached as silently as possible. One of our sentinels, hearing a slight sound, cried, ‘Qui vive?’ I was at the time dozing, with my head on a table and my gun lying across my arms. The sentinel told me that he heard a voice from the river. I went up at once to the bastion to see whether it was Indians or Frenchmen. I asked, ‘Who are you?’ One of them answered, ‘We are Frenchmen; it is La Monnerie, who comes to bring you help.’ I caused the gate to be opened, placed a sentinel there, and went down to the river to meet them. As soon as I saw Monsieur de la Monnerie I saluted him and said, ‘Monsieur, I surrender my arms to you.’ He answered gallantly, ‘Mademoiselle, they are in good hands.’ ‘Better than you think,’ I returned. He inspected the fort and found everything in order and a sentinel on each bastion. ‘It is time to relieve them, monsieur,’ said I; ‘we have not been off our bastions for a week.’”

A band of converts from the Saut St. Louis arrived soon after, followed the trail of their heathen countrymen, overtook them on Lake Champlain and recovered twenty or more French prisoners. Madeleine de Verchères was not the only heroine of her family. Her father's fort was the Castle Dangerous of Canada, and it was but two years before that her mother, left with

three or four armed men, and beset by the Iroquois, threw herself with her followers into the blockhouse, and held the assailants two days at bay till the Marquis de Crisasi came with troops to her relief.

THE OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1759 : FORT NIAGARA AND CROWN POINT

THE apathy and incapacity which had characterized the government of England since the death of Henry Pelham in 1754 had brought the country to the brink of ruin, and the colonists of America to the verge of extinction. William Pitt (afterwards Earl of Chatham), the most capable man in the kingdom, was kept out of office as long as possible by the jealousy of the king, until George recognized the truth of Pitt's conviction that he, and he alone, could save the country. Then the famous coalition between Newcastle and Pitt took place, in which it was stipulated that while the duke managed the individual members of Parliament, and dispensed the patronage of the crown, Pitt should have complete control of foreign affairs, which at that time included all colonial matters.

During the first year of the Seven Years' War, which lasted from 1756 to 1763, the French had carried all before them in America. The disasters of the English had not been confined to the northern states, for the French determined to shut them completely out of the west, and to

enclose them by a chain of forts between the Alleghany mountains and the Atlantic. This chain stretched from Quebec to Louisiana, and included a fort on the Ohio which the English had built, but which the French had seized and strengthened and named after their governor, Fort Duquesne. The defeat of Washington at Fort Necessity left the French in complete possession of the Ohio valley. In dismay, Virginia appealed to the mother country for help, and General Braddock was sent out in 1756. On his way to attack Fort Duquesne he was met by a force of French and Indians, and utterly routed. Of his army of 86 officers and 1,373 men, 63 of the former and 904 of the latter were either killed or wounded, Braddock himself being among the slain. The survivors made a hasty retreat under Washington, who in this expedition acted as aide-de-camp to Braddock, and was the only member of his staff who escaped unhurt. A series of sanguinary Indian raids took place all along the frontier. General Johnson tried to capture Crown Point, but failed ignominiously, and General Shirley, who had marched against Fort Niagara, did not attempt to attack it. The English appeared thoroughly disheartened and paralysed.

But the energy and enthusiasm of Pitt infused unwonted courage and confidence into his countrymen, both in Europe and wherever the English and French came into contact, which enabled them in a short time to retrieve all their losses. One of the first acts of the new minister was to recall the incompetent and indolent commander-in-chief in America, the Earl of Loudoun, together with Admiral Holbourne and General Webb, who

were no match, for the Marquis of Montcalm, the brilliant French governor of Canada. With the instinct of genius he chose as their successors General Amherst, Admiral Boscawen and General Wolfe, who all in a short time admirably justified his choice.

The plan of campaign, which opened in 1758, was to attack simultaneously the three all-important French positions: on the Ohio, on Lake Champlain and at the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. General Forbes, a Scottish veteran, was to march on Fort Duquesne, General Abercromby on Crown Point and Ticonderoga, while General Amherst and Admiral Boscawen were to lay siege to Louisbourg, the recognized key to the St. Lawrence. To Wolfe was entrusted the most important duty of the whole expedition, that of attacking the French in the stronghold and centre of their dominions, Quebec.

One of the first successes was gained by General Forbes, who took Fort Duquesne, which was re-named Pittsburg in honour of the great statesman.

THE campaign of 1759 opened with the advance of Brigadier Prideaux, at the head of nearly four thousand regular troops and militia, and a large body of Iroquois, led by Sir William Johnson,¹

¹ This remarkable man, born in Ireland in 1715, went to America in 1738 to manage an estate belonging to his uncle on the Mohawk river. By just and honest dealings, and his native eloquence, he obtained great influence over the Indians, one tribe of whom made him a chief. He was instrumental in bringing many tribes to the British side in the struggle with France, and concluded the treaty with the Indians in 1768 which brought the Indian war to a close.

against the fort at Niagara. Leaving a detachment under Colonel Haldimand to construct a tenable post at Oswego, the army embarked on Lake Ontario the 1st of July, and, coasting its southern shore, landed on the 7th at one of its inlets six miles east of Niagara. Situated at the apex of the angle formed by the junction of the river with the lake, the fort was easily invested on the land side, while the numerous armed boats of the British effectually intercepted all communication by water.

Pouchot, the French commandant, had no sooner learned the approach of the British than he dispatched a courier eastward to Frontenac to solicit aid, and another to Detroit and the other western posts, with orders to their commandants to hasten to his assistance with all the men they could spare and as many Indians as could be collected. Confidently expecting succour, he determined to defend the fort to the last extremity, and returned a prompt refusal to the demand of the British general requiring him to surrender at discretion. "My post is strong," said he, "my garrison faithful, and the longer I hold out the more I will win the esteem of the enemy."

Prideaux planned his approaches with skill, and rapidly advanced them towards the defences, which soon began to crumble under a well-aimed and vigorous fire. Encouraged by the arrival of a small body of French and Indians, who succeeded at night in getting into the fort unobserved, the besieged made a sally on the 11th, but were almost immediately repulsed and driven

in under the shelter of their guns. On the night of the 13th the British finished their parallels to the lake, and the next day their fire became so heavy that the besieged could only find safety in the covered way and behind their ramparts. On the 19th the French schooner *Iroquois* arrived from Frontenac, and lay off the fort, but dare not venture in owing to the British guns, which night and day kept up a harassing and destructive fire. Still Pouchot held bravely out, and watched anxiously for the aid which the summer breezes of Erie should bring to his assistance, and which Prideaux, aware of its approach, had already taken measures to intercept. But the latter was not fated to see the successful issue of his skill and courage. On the evening of the 19th he was killed in the trenches while issuing orders, when the command devolved on Sir William Johnson.

Meanwhile, De Aubrey rapidly descended from Detroit at the head of twelve hundred Frenchmen collected from the different posts towards Ohio, and nearly fourteen hundred Indians. On the 23rd four savages made their way into the beleaguered fort with a letter to Pouchot, informing him that succour was at hand and that the British lines would speedily be attacked. But Johnson's scouts had given him ample intelligence of De Aubrey's approach, and he coolly prepared for the combat. Leaving sufficient troops to guard the trenches, he threw forward strong pickets on the evening of the 23rd to occupy the woods on either side of the rough forest road leading from

Chippewa to Niagara, and connected these by a chain of Indian skirmishers. These arrangements completed, and no enemy appearing, the troops lay down to rest with their arms in their hands.

It was a warm July night, and the stars glimmered brightly down upon the sombre forest, now unruffled by even the faintest breeze. To the contemplative mind the scene must have been one of peculiar solemnity and grandeur. Close at hand the stillness was unbroken save by the monotonous breathings of the many sleepers or the sentinel's tread. A little further on there was a brief pause around the beleaguered fort, and then its dark sides were suddenly illuminated by its own guns, or revealed by the red light of a salvo from the hostile trenches. From the distance, the dull boom of the cataract fell upon the ear like the noontide roar of life in London, or the rush of the approaching storm. The white tents of the besieging army, the watch-fires of the camp, the bright moon whose rays peered softly down amidst the sprays of the forest tree to glance from the polished muskets of the sleeping sentinel or the Indian tomahawk, and the soft feathery cloud of spray that rose upward from the Horse-shoe Falls, all tended to complete a scene of surpassing interest.

On the following morning, at daybreak, Johnson pushed forward his grenadier companies and part of the 26th regiment to strengthen his front, while the 44th regiment was formed in reserve to preserve the communication with the troops in the trenches,

and to act wherever its assistance might be needed. About eight o'clock the head of the French column was perceived advancing through the woods, with large bodies of Indians covering either flank. As the enemy came on, the British outposts fell steadily back on the main body without firing, while the Iroquois pressed forward to parley with the French Indians, with a view of inclining them to peace. The latter refused to abandon their allies, and accordingly the warriors of the Six Nations again resumed their post on the flanks of the British.

De Aubrey now speedily formed his force, and advanced to the attack. Shouting their appalling war-cry, the Indians burst through the woods, and fell furiously upon the British line, which coolly awaited their approach, and swept them away with a few rolling volleys. The close and steady fire with which they were received astonished the western warriors, and so thorough was their discomfiture that they disappeared altogether from the field of battle. Their flight left the flanks of the French completely exposed, and they were soon boldly turned by the Iroquois, who pressed rapidly forward through the woods, while the British held their ground in front with the utmost steadiness. Attacked on all sides by greatly superior numbers, the French hesitated, gave way, and, after an action of little more than half-an-hour, broke into utter rout. De Aubrey and all his surviving officers, with a great part of his troops, were taken prisoners, while the fugitives were rapidly pursued and slain or driven

44 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

into the wilderness, where the numerous dead lay uncounted.

No sooner had Johnson withdrawn his forces from the battle-field, than he sent an officer with a flag of truce to inform Pouchot of the victory he had won, and exhorted him to surrender without further bloodshed. The French chief doubted the information, and requested that one of his officers might be allowed to see the prisoners, and hear the tale of their defeat from them. The request was granted, and thus assured of the hopelessness of aid, Pouchot surrendered up the fort and garrison. The terms were liberal. The French were to march out with all the honours of war, and then to lay down their arms on the lake shore. The women and children were to have safe conveyance to the nearest port of France, while the garrison, six hundred strong, were to be conveyed to New York by the most convenient route. All stores, provisions and arms, were to be given up to the British general, who undertook, on his part, to preserve his prisoners from every injury and insult, a promise which, unlike Montcalm, he faithfully redeemed.

Meanwhile the commander-in-chief assembled the main army at Lake George, and had considerable difficulty in keeping the militia together, owing to desertion to their homes. Threats and promises and moderate punishments failed to keep them by their colours, till at length a general court-martial sentenced four deserters to be shot, and even this terrible example did not altogether abate the evil. On the 22nd of June, Amherst

traced out the plan of Fort George, near the spot where Fort William Henry formerly stood, and on the 21st of July, every preparation being completed, his army, over eleven thousand strong, one-half of whom were regulars, with fifty-four guns, embarked and moved down the lake in four columns. Next day it landed near the place where Abercromby had disembarked the year before. The British vanguard, composed principally of light troops, pushed rapidly forward into the bush, and soon encountered a detachment of French and Indians, who were overpowered and dispersed. Amherst followed with his main body in good order, and halted for the night at the saw-mills, preparatory to an assault on the French lines, which he learned from some deserters were guarded by De Bourlemaque, with a body of three thousand four hundred men, composed of regulars, Canadians and Indians.

That night the British lay upon their arms, while every exertion was made to bring up the artillery. But, although Amherst's force was inferior to Abercromby's army, the French next morning withdrew from the lines which had enabled them to gain their victory of the preceding year, and fell back upon Fort Carillon. The British grenadiers immediately occupied the deserted entrenchment, and the rest of the army encamped a short distance to the rear. A sharp fire was soon opened from the fort on the British camp, but no loss was sustained owing to the great height and strength of the breastwork, which now proved a most effectual shelter. De

Bourlemaque soon perceived that even the defence of the fort was impracticable, and, in pursuance of his orders in that case, silently abandoned it on the night of the 23rd, leaving four hundred men behind to continue such resistance as might conceal his retreat. These carried out their orders in the most effectual manner by making an assault upon the Besiegers' trenches, where they killed and wounded sixteen men, and caused considerable confusion in the darkness of the night. During the 24th and 25th they kept up a constant fire on the trenches, and having got the range accurately, caused a good deal of trouble and some loss of life. On the night of the 26th, deserters brought intelligence to Amherst that the garrison had abandoned the fort, but left every gun loaded and pointed, mines charged to blow up the defences, and a lighted fuse communicating with the powder magazine. In a few moments a tremendous explosion confirmed their statements, and the next minute the flames of the wooden breastwork, barracks, and stores, fell far and near upon the lake and forest, their yellow hue deepened at intervals by flashes of the bursting guns and exploding mines.

General Amherst promptly detached some light troops in pursuit of the retreating French, who captured several boats laden with powder and sixteen prisoners. At daybreak a sergeant volunteered to strike the French flag, which still floated uninjured above the ruined fort, and raise that of Britain in its place. A detachment soon after succeeded in extinguishing the flames, when

OPENING OF CAMPAIGN OF 1759 47

the work of repairing the fort was speedily proceeded with, while Captain *Loring of the navy* raised some French boats which had been sunk, and commenced the construction of a brig, in order to strengthen the British naval power, which was much inferior to that of the enemy on the lake.

The capture of Crown Point was the next important step to be accomplished, and Major Rogers was dispatched with two hundred rangers to examine the position, establish himself in some strong point near the fort, and hold out if attacked, till relieved by the advance of the army. But it was soon ascertained that the French had also dismantled and abandoned Crown Point, which was accordingly taken possession of by a British detachment. On the 4th of August Amherst came up with his main body, encamped, and traced out the lines of a new fort, as a protection against the scouting parties of the French and Indians, who had so long been the terror of the British frontier settlements.

While the bulk of the army lay inactive at Crown Point, a detachment of two hundred rangers, under the indefatigable Rogers, already so distinguished in border warfare, was dispatched to punish the Indians at Lake St. Francis for detaining an officer and some men who had been sent with a flag of truce to offer them peace on condition of their remaining neutral. Rogers suffered the greatest hardships in penetrating the untrodden wilderness. One-fourth of his men dropped behind from fatigue, or perished in the march. Still he persevered, arrived in the vicinity

of his destination on the evening of the 22nd of October, and pushed forward alone to reconnoitre. The Indians were engaged in the war dance, and, exhausted by fatigue, as midnight approached they sank into a profound slumber. But a foe as subtle as themselves, and infuriated by long years of injury, now hovered near, prepared to inflict the punishment their numerous massacres of women and children so justly merited. At two o'clock in the morning the British burst upon the sleepers with a loud cry of vengeance, and two hundred warriors were speedily slain, but the women and children were spared. Meanwhile a French detachment had captured Rogers's boats, and threatened to cut off his retreat. Breaking into small parties, the British sought the shelter of the forest, and underwent the most extreme hardships before reaching a friendly settlement.

On the 10th of October a brig mounting eighteen guns arrived at Crown Point from Ticonderoga, and a sloop of sixteen guns being also ready, the army embarked in boats for Isle-aux-Noix, and proceeded up the lake in four divisions. But a severe storm and mishaps of various kinds retarded its progress, and although the greater part of the French fleet was destroyed, the lateness of the season rendered it useless to advance, and Amherst reluctantly retired to place his troops in winter quarters; a measure the more necessary as the Provincials had become unusually sickly. Thus closed the campaign of the British forces, which menaced Canada towards the west.

THE SIEGE OF LOUISBOURG

THE period between the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, by which Cape Breton was restored to France, and 1759, when it was re-taken by the English, was a time, if not of actual warfare, of almost constant intrigues. The French were irritated at the mistake they made in giving up Acadia, and set their hearts upon regaining possession of it. They asserted that the ancient limits of that territory did not extent beyond the isthmus of Chignecto, upon which they proceeded to erect the forts of Gaspereau and Beauséjour, and also one at the mouth of the river St. John to control the land and sea approaches to Cape Breton. The approaches by way of Lake Champlain and the Richélieu were guarded by Fort St. John at the northern extremity of the lake, and by Fort Frederick, Crown Point, and Ticonderoga, at the head of Lake Sacrament, later known as Lake George. These forts were not only a protection to Cape Breton, but also a menace to Acadia. The English, on their side, did not neglect precautions against attack.

The town of Halifax, which has ever since been the capital of Nova Scotia (Acadia), was founded and fortified by soldiers discharged after the peace of 1748. It was also decided, as a matter of precaution, to bring the Acadians more completely under English authority. There had never been a formal transfer of allegiance, and the sympathies of these French settlers were naturally with their countrymen. When called upon to

50 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

take the oath of fealty to King George they stipulated for exemption from military service. The governor, General Lawrence, could not consent to this, and as the Acadians adhered to their conditions they were ordered to leave the country and were scattered far and wide among the English colonies. This, of course, was a harsh proceeding, but the state of affairs rendered it absolutely necessary. Longfellow's poem, *Evangeline*, deals only with the sentimental side of the question, and takes no notice of political exigencies.

THE island of Cape Breton, whose destiny was now about to be determined, was appropriated by France under the regency of the Duke of Orleans, after the death of Louis XIV, and named Isle Royale. Appreciating the importance of its position at the entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, no expense was spared by the French Government in the erection of Louisbourg, the stronghold and capital of the island, upon which, according to Raznal, no less a sum than £1,250,000 sterling was expended. Large though the amount appears, it is not incredible, for the stone was quarried and the lime prepared in France, whence engineers, masons and labourers were sent out to construct the town and citadel, and to fortify the harbour. Although deemed almost impregnable, and styled the Dunkirk of America, Louisbourg was reduced by Pepperel and Warren in 1745, from which time it remained in the possession of England until 1748, when, in accordance with the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, she was obliged to restore it; for France attached so much

importance to the island, as the bulwark of Canada, and as a central point of communication with her West Indian territories, that she would consent to no terms of peace which did not include its restoration.

The Bay of Gabarous, in which the British fleet was now anchored, extends from Cape L'Orembeck on the north-east to Cape Cormorant on the south-west, with an inland sweep of about ten miles. Inside this bay, and completely landlocked, was the magnificent natural harbour of Louisbourg, the narrow entrance to which, between the lighthouse point on the right hand and the extremity of the tongue of land upon which stood the town, was further defended by a formidable battery on an island in the centre of the channel. In this inner basin, protected by the cannon of the town, and a grand battery on the north bank, lay the French fleet, while the fortress to the left, or west of the harbour, presented heavy batteries towards the sea, and three strongly fortified fronts towards the land. In addition to these permanent works the French had established, for the present, three strong breastworks, defended by three thousand men, posted along the shore of the bay for a distance of several miles westward of the town, at every spot where a descent was possible. At intervals were masked batteries of heavy cannon, and swivels of large calibre; and between the lines and the water's edge, wherever there was an impenetrable barrier of rocks, there were artificial thickets of prostrate trees, with their branches towards the sea.

52 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

Until the 7th of June the tempestuous state of the weather prevented every attempt on the part of the invaders; but the wind and the swell abating that evening, the admiral gave hopes that something might be done next morning. Accordingly, at midnight, the troops began to enter their boats, and with the first glimpse of dawn on the 8th the covering cannon of the fleet began to play upon the shore. The fire ceasing in about a quarter of an hour, the boats, in three divisions, made for the land. The division on the right, consisting of five battalions commanded by Brigadier Whitmore, rowed eastward, in the direction of Louisbourg, as if intending to land upon White Point; and the central division of six battalions, under Brigadier Lawrence, proceeded straight forward towards Freshwater Cove, in order to make a show of landing there, but virtually with the object of diverting the attention of the enemy from the real descent of Wolfe's brigade upon the left.

The detachment commanded by Brigadier Wolfe comprised twelve companies of Grenadiers, Frazer's Highlanders, Major Scott's Light Infantry corps of five hundred and fifty marksmen selected from the different regiments, and a company of Provincial Rangers. The sailors plied their oars vigorously through the heavy sea, while the strictest order and silence were observed by the soldiers, who were assured by the confidence and calmness of their young leader, towards whom not only the men, but officers double his age, looked up as the rising star of

their profession. No sooner had they got within musket shot of the shore than a deadly volley issued from the batteries behind the green branches of the trees which concealed them. But cannon and musketry were not their worst antagonists. The sea, which had grown more and more boisterous since they had set out, now lashing the coast, dashed them against the rocks, shattering several of the boats, upsetting others; and many a brave fellow, who hoped ere night to win renown in the field, found an instant watery grave.

Wolfe, perceiving that some of the Light Infantry had got ashore, beckoned to the rest to follow. Without arms of any kind, his cane only in his hand, he sprang from his boat and, scrambling through the spray, over rocks and steeps, quickly joined them and formed the men upon the beach, as, one way or another, they reached the land. The troops, in no wise discouraged, but exasperated by the masked fire which raked them, had still to climb a height of about twenty feet in order to reach the hostile lines; but, following their chief, they soon gained the ascent, and attacking the defenders of the nearest post with their bayonets, speedily routed them. In like manner post after post was taken. Lawrence's division, having landed at the same place immediately after Wolfe's, and additional reinforcements arriving from the fleet, the enemy, forsaking their cannon and stores, fled towards Louisbourg, and for four miles were pursued over hills, hollows and swamps by Wolfe's and Lawrence's brigades. As soon as the fugitives had gained their refuge,

a fierce cannonade from the town was opened upon the pursuers, "which," says General Amherst in his journal, "was so far of use that it pointed out how near I might encamp to invest it." On the ground before the town then taken possession of, the invaders afterwards formed the encampment which the main army continued to occupy until the end of the siege, and in the course of the same day the remainder of the land force got on shore; but owing to the roughness of the sea and the constant fog, neither artillery, tents, provisions, nor ammunition could be landed for three days.

On the 12th, the commander-in-chief learned that the French had dismantled their grand battery on the north side of the harbour, called in their outposts, and concentrated all their power within the walls of Louisbourg—a proceeding which gave the English an uninterrupted range of the country. He therefore sent Wolfe, with twelve hundred men, round the harbour to the lighthouse point, which at once commanded the sea wall of the town, the shipping and the island battery, and at the same time he sent the requisite artillery and stores by sea to meet the brigadier at L'Orembeck.

From the Lighthouse Point, Wolfe kept up an incessant fire upon the island battery until the 25th of the month, on which day it was silenced. Then, leaving a detachment of artillery behind him to keep it from being restored, he returned to the camp of the grand army before Louisbourg to superintend the formation of an

approach to the west gate. In order to prevent the English fleet from getting into the harbour, rendered defenceless by the demolition of the island battery, the French sank four men-of-war at the entrance; and of their entire fleet there were now left but three line-of-battle ships and one 36-gun frigate.

A large party from the town having crept out on the morning of the 1st of July, Wolfe, ever on the alert, heading the Light Infantry corps, drove them back with a brisk fire. The brigadier on the same day took post on the hills northward of the town, and began to erect a powerful battery, which continued to play with the most destructive effect on the fortress, as well as on the shipping that remained in the harbour.

On the 3rd, Wolfe was back again with the grand army, forming an approach to the right within six hundred and fifty yards of the covered way; but the delays arising from the rugged nature of the country, which necessitated the construction of roads and draining of bogs, together with adverse weather, greatly retarded his operations. The making of fascines, of which the *épaulement*¹ consumed a vast quantity, kept five hundred men employed; and constant fogs hindering the cannonade for hours at a time, it could only be resumed at intervals whenever there was an occasional glare of light.

Besides these impediments, more than a hundred of Colonel Messorvey's company of carpenters were at one time disabled by small-pox, of which

¹ Rampart.

the colonel and his son died; the admiral, however, rendered great assistance by sending four hundred seamen to work at the batteries.

The garrison seizing every opportunity of making sorties, there were frequent skirmishes; but Wolfe having taught the Light Infantry corps a method of attacking and retreating behind the hills, they invariably compelled the enemy to retire. It is said that after an occurrence of this kind, many of the English officers, having expressed surprise at the expertness of his men, and the novelty of the performance, Wolfe asked one more intelligent than the rest what he thought of it. "I think I see something here of the history of the Carduchi, who harassed Xenophon, and hung upon his rear in his retreat over the mountains," was the reply. "You are right," said Wolfe, "I had it thence; but our friends are astonished at what I have shown them because they have read nothing."

Notwithstanding heavy rain, the works were not discontinued for a moment; and on the 16th, Wolfe, with a body of Highlanders and Grenadiers, took possession of the heights in front of the fortress, and effected a lodgment in the glacis, which exposed the parapet and embrasures to the fire of the musketry. The approaches, in carrying ~~on~~ which the men underwent great fatigue, were considerably advanced, when an accident happened which afforded them great relief, and increased the distress of the enemy. On the 21st the *Entrepreneur* exploded in the harbour, setting on fire two other ships, which burned furiously;

whilst, in order to prevent boats from the town coming to their assistance, the batteries kept firing upon them until they were completely destroyed. Next day the besiegers' shells set the citadel in flames, but General Amherst humanely ordered his fire to be directed against the defences, so as not to destroy the town. The following night the barracks were burned to the ground.

Meanwhile Wolfe was erecting more batteries, and progressing with his approaches. On the 25th he writes to the general from the "trenches at daybreak": "The five-gun battery is finished, and the cannon in readiness to mount. We want platforms, artillery officers to take the direction, and ammunition. If these are sent early, we may batter in breach this afternoon. Holland has opened a new *boyau*,¹ has carried on about one hundred and forty or one hundred and fifty yards, and is now within fifty or sixty yards of the glacis. The enemy were apprehensive of a storm, and fired smartly for about half-an-hour, which drove the workmen in; but when the fire ceased they returned to their business and did a great deal. You will be pleased to indulge me with six hours' rest that I may serve in the trenches at night."

Although M. Drucour, the brave governor of Louisbourg, was by this time convinced that the reduction of the place was inevitable, he determined to hold it as long as he possibly could; for should he not receive the succour he expected from Montcalm, he at least hoped, by prolonging

¹ A zig-zag trench connecting with other trenches.

his resistance, to detain the besiegers until it would be too late in the season for them either to reinforce the British army upon the American continent, or to ascend the river St. Lawrence. In this resolution he was ably seconded by his intrepid wife, who was continually on the ramparts, supplying the wants of the soldiers, and encouraging them by occasionally firing the guns with her own hand. The condition of the garrison was now such that for eight days neither officers nor men had a moment's rest, nor, indeed, a place to take rest, for there was not even a secure spot in which to lay the wounded. Yet there was not a murmur amongst them, and none deserted but a few German mercenaries. The cannonade, which they had kept up night and day, grew weaker and weaker, and instead of balls, they were driven to discharge grapeshot, old iron, or whatever missiles they could find.

Admiral Boscawen, having at length resolved to take or destroy the two ships which remained of the French fleet, Captains Balfour and Laprey, with six hundred sailors in boats, entered the harbour on the night of the 25th, when they gallantly took the *Bienfaisant* of seventy-four guns, and towed her away from the town; but the *Prudesse* being aground, they were obliged to burn her. In consequence of this misfortune, and Wolfe's batteries having made several breaches in the King's, the Queen's and the Dauphin's bastions, while his approaches rapidly neared the covered way, the governor, advised by a council of war, wrote to General Amherst

early on the 26th of July, offering to capitulate upon the same terms as those granted to the English at Port Mahon.

The admiral had just come ashore, and told the general that he purposed sending six ships into the harbour next day, when the messenger arrived with the Chevalier Drucour's letter. The British commanders immediately answered by informing him of their intention to attack the town by sea as well as land; but wishing to avoid the effusion of blood, they allowed him one hour to decide, either to surrender at discretion, or incur the consequences of further resistance. Piqued at this, the governor replied: "To answer your Excellencies in as few words as possible, I have the honour to repeat to you that my resolution is still the same, and that I will suffer the consequences and sustain the attack you speak of." His mind was made up to abide by his decision, when M. Prévot, the intendant of the colony, presented him with a petition from the inhabitants, imploring him to spare them the horrors of a general assault. Satisfied that he had done his duty towards his king, and that obstinacy on his part would only lead to unnecessary bloodshed, he at length yielded, and sent back the officer who had carried his previous communications to inform his more fortunate adversaries that, trusting to the honour of a generous foe, he would submit to the law of force.

By a provision of the capitulation agreed upon between the British commanders and M. Drucour, the surrender of Cape Breton included all appurten-

ances, the inhabitants of which, as well as of Louisbourg, were to be carried to France, while the several garrisons were to yield as prisoners of war. General Amherst therefore sent Lord Rollo and Major Dalling to take possession of Isle St. Jean, now Prince Edward's Island, which, from its convenient position, mildness of climate, and fertility, had been invaluable to Canada, supplying Quebec with corn and cattle. It was likewise a source of great annoyance to Nova Scotia, affording shelter to hostile Indians, who made frequent irruptions into that colony. The removal of the wretched people, many of whom escaped to Canada, was a painful and tedious operation, which delayed the detachment until the end of the season.

TICONDEROGA

FROM the brilliant successes on the island of Cape Breton it is now necessary to turn to the painfully chequered course of events on the American continent, where the execution of Pitt's magnificent designs was unhappily entrusted to very different men from the conquerors of Louisbourg. The great minister's plan of operations had embraced the whole extent of French American dominions, from the embattled heights of Louisbourg and Quebec to the lone but luxuriant wilderness of the west. By the protracted defence of the loyal and skilful Drucour, the overwhelming forces of Amherst and Boscawen were

delayed till the advancing season had rendered impossible, for that year, their descent upon the valley of the St. Lawrence.

The next British expedition in order and in importance was directed against Ticonderoga and Crown Point. By the possession of these strongholds the French had long been enabled to harass the English frontier almost with impunity, and to command the navigation of the extensive lakes which formed the high road to the heart of Canada.

The third army was destined to march upon Fort Duquesne, of disastrous memory, and to establish the British power in the valley of the Ohio, for the possession of which the sanguinary war had commenced, and the spot where blood had first been shed. By the success of this object, all communication between the French of Canada and Louisiana would be effectually cut off, and the countries watered by the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi left at the mercy of England's naval power.

The largest European army ever yet seen on the American continent was assembled at Albany and in the neighbourhood, under the command of Abercromby, the general-in-chief since Lord Loudoun's recall. A detachment of the Royal Artillery, and seven strong battalions of the line, amounting altogether to 6,350 regulars, with 2,000 of the provincial militia, composed this formidable force. Their object was the destruction of Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Towards the end of June they broke up from Albany, and encamped

upon the ground where the melancholy ruins of Fort William Henry still remained. On the 5th of July the cannon, ammunition and stores arrived, and on that day the army embarked on the waters of Lake George; 1,035 boats conveyed this powerful expedition, and a number of rafts armed with artillery accompanied them, to overcome any opposition that might be offered to the landing.

The armament continued its progress steadily through the day; when evening fell Abercromby gave the signal to lie to at a place called Sabbath Point, on the shores of the lake, there the troops landed for a time and lighted large fires to distract the attention of the enemy. In the dead of night they were suddenly re-embarked, and hurried on to the Narrows, where the waters contract into the stream that communicates with Wood Creek; there they arrived at five o'clock the following morning. An advanced guard of two thousand men was thrown ashore at first dawn under the gallant Bradstreet, and these having encountered no enemy, the remainder of the army was rapidly landed. As the troops disembarked they were formed into four columns, some light infantry were sent on to scour the line of march, and the advance was sounded.

Ticonderoga, the first object of the British attack, was a fort of some strength, situated on the most salient point of the peninsula between Lakes George and Champlain. To the eastward the rugged shore afforded sufficient protection; to the west and north regular lines of defence had been erected by the French engineers, and an

\extensive swamp spreading over nearly all the landward face embarrassed the approaches of an enemy. The neighbouring country was a dense and tangled forest.

Early in the summer of this year the Marquis de Vaudreuil, governor of Canada, had received intelligence of Abercromby's extensive preparations to gain the positions of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and with them the command of the important chain of waters leading to the river St. Lawrence and the heart of the French possessions. The governor saw the necessity of defending this enterprise at any cost; he called to his aid Montcalm, already famous by deserved success, and placed at his disposal all the troops that could be spared from every part of the colony; on the 20th of June they reached the position they were directed to defend.

On the 1st of July Montcalm sent an advance of three regiments under M. de Bourlemaque along the north-western shores of Lake George. When the British disembarked, however, they were in such force as to render opposition hopeless; this corps of observation therefore fell back upon M. de Bourlemaque, and he too retired towards the main body, under the command of Montcalm.

So difficult and tangled were the woods on their retreat that, in spite of their knowledge of the country, one French column of five hundred men lost their way, fell into confusion, and in their bewilderment almost retraced their steps. The English pressed rapidly on in pursuit, and from the ignorance of the guides their divisions

64 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

also became confounded, and mixed up together in alarming disorder. The officers vigorously exerted themselves to restore the broken ranks, but in the midst of their efforts, the right centre column, led by the good and gallant Lord Howe, was suddenly fronted by the body of the enemy, who had gone astray in the forests. They joined in bitter strife: almost hand to hand, in the swamps, or from tree to tree on the hill-side, the stout Frenchmen held their own against the British troops, and, nothing daunted by the unexpected danger, disdained to yield. At the first shock many of Howe's light infantry went down; he himself, hurrying to the front, was struck by a musket ball in the breast, and instantly expired. His men, infuriated by the loss of their beloved leader, swarmed on through the thick woods, and finally overpowered or destroyed the enemy. Not, however, till four-fifths of the French were wounded, slain or taken, and many of the conquerors killed and disabled, did they yield their ground.

That night the victors occupied the field of battle; to this their advantage was confined, for the disorganization of the troops had frightfully increased during the unpropitious march, in the hard-fought, skirmish, and by the loss of their best and most trusted chief. The vigour and spirit of Abercomby's army seemed to pass away with Lord Howe. This gallant man, from the time he had landed in America, had wisely instructed his regiment for the peculiar service of that difficult country: no useless encumbrance of

baggage was allowed; he himself set the example and encountered privation and fatigue in the same chivalrous spirit with which he faced the foe; graceful and kind in his manners, and considerate to the humblest under his charge, his officers and soldiers heartily obeyed the chief because they loved the man. At the fatal moment when he was lost to England her glory and welfare most needed his aid. He lived long enough for his own honour, but not for that of his country.

The price of this slight advantage was ruinous to the English army; from the unhappy moment when Lord Howe was slain the general lost all resolution, and as a natural consequence the troops lost all confidence. Order and discipline were no longer observed, and the after-operations can only be attributed to infatuation. At dawn on the day subsequent to the combat, Abercromby actually marched his forces back to the place where they had disembarked the day before, through the dreary and almost impassable wilderness, traversed with the utmost difficulty but a few hours before. However, on the return of the army to the landing-place, a detachment was sent to gain an important post held by the French at some saw-mills, two miles from Ticonderoga. Colonel Bradstreet was selected for this duty; with him were sent the 44th regiment, six companies of the 60th, some Rangers, and a number of boatmen, among whom were those who had forced the passage of the Onondaga River; altogether nearly seven thousand men.

The point to be assailed was approachable only

by one narrow bridge; this the French destroyed, and, not caring to encounter a very superior force, fell back towards their stronghold. Bradstreet was not to be deterred by difficulties; accustomed to the necessity of finding resources, the stream was soon spanned by a temporary arch; with unwearied zeal he urged on the exertions of his men, and that very night, not only his own command, but the whole British army was once more advanced across the stream, and established in an advantageous position near Ticonderoga.

At earliest light, Colonel Clark, chief engineer, and several officers of rank, *r  connoitred* the enemy's position to the best of their power. They could discover but little: a dense forest and a deep morass lay between them and Ticonderoga. They observed, indeed, a breastwork, with some felled trees in front rising out of the only accessible part of the dreary swamp, but as to its nature, strength, and disposition for defence, their military skill and experience could afford them no light. Their report included a variety of opinions: some treated the defences as slight and inconsiderable, and presenting only a deceptive show of strength; others, and they far better qualified to judge, acknowledged their formidable strength. Abercromby unfortunately adopted the former opinion, and rashly resolved to attack without waiting the essential aid of his artillery: his penalty was severe.

On the morning of the 8th of July the French garrison was called to arms, and marched into the threatened entrenchments. The regiments

of Bearn, La Reine, and Guienne, under M. de Levi, occupied the right of the defences; those of La Sarre, Languedoc, and two strong detachments under M. de Bourlemaque the left. In the centre Montcalm held under his own command the regiments of Berry, Royal Roussillon, and the light troops. The colonial militia and Canadian irregulars, with the Indians, were posted behind some fieldworks in the plain, on the flanks of the main defence, supported by a small reserve. The French entrenchment presented in front, as was too late discovered, an almost impassable barrier; a solid earthen breastwork of eight feet in height protected the defenders from the hostile shot, and the gradual slope from its summit was covered for nearly one hundred yards with abattis of felled trees laid close together, the branches sharpened and turned towards the foe. However, on either flank this grim position was open; no obstacle presented itself that could have stopped the stride of an English grenadier. Of this the hapless Abercromby was ignorant or unobservant. The French chief knew it well, and gave orders that, in case of the assailants appearing on either of these weak points, his troops should abandon the field and retreat to their boats as they best might.

With the rashness that bears no relation to courage, the British general determined to throw the flower of his force upon the very centre of the enemy's strength. Whilst the army was forming for the ill-starred attack, Sir William Johnson arrived with four hundred and forty

Indians, who were at once pushed forward into the woods to feel the way and occupy the enemy.

At one o'clock, when the midday sun poured down its burning rays upon the scene of strife, Abercromby gave the fatal order to attack. As his advance felt the fire, the light troops and the militia were moved aside, and the regular battalions called to the front. The grenadier companies of the line led the way, Murray's Highlanders followed close behind. With quick but steady step these intrepid men pressed on through the heavy swamp and tangled underwood; their ranks now broken by the uneven ground, now shattered by the deliberate fire of the French; impeded, though not confused, they passed the open ground, and without one faltering pause or random shot, the thinned but unshaken column dashed against the abattis.

Then began a cruel and hopeless slaughter. With fiery valour the British grenadiers forced themselves through the almost impenetrable fence; but still new obstacles appeared, and while, writhing among the pointed branches, they threatened the inaccessible enemy in impotent fury, the cool fire of the French from behind the breastwork smote them one by one. The Highlanders, who should have remained in reserve, were not to be restrained, and rushed to the front; they were apparently somewhat more successful; active, impetuous, lightly clad and armed, they won their way through the felled trees, and died upon the very parapet; ere long, half of these gallant men and nearly all their officers were

slain or desperately wounded. Then fresh troops pressed on to the deadly strife, rivalling the courage, and sharing the fate, of those who had led the way. For nearly four hours, like the succeeding waves of an ebb tide, they attacked again and again, each time losing somewhat of their vantage ground, now fiercely rushing on, unflinchingly enduring the murderous fire, then sullenly falling back to reform their broken ranks for a fresh effort. It was vain at last as it was at first: the physical difficulties were impassable, and upon that rude barrier—which the simplest manœuvre would have avoided, or one hour of well-plied artillery swept away—the flower of British chivalry was crushed and broken.

An accident at length arrested this melancholy carnage. One of the British columns, in a hurried advance, lost their way, and became bewildered in the neighbouring forest; when, after a time, they emerged upon the open country, a heavy fire was perceived close in front, as they thought from the French entrenchments. With unhappy promptitude they poured a deadly volley upon the supposed enemy, but when a breeze from the lake lifted the curtain of the smoke from the bloody scene, they saw that their shot had fallen with fatal precision amongst the red coats of their countrymen. Then, indeed, hesitation, confusion and panic arose in the English ranks; their desperate courage had proved vain; a frightful loss had fallen upon them; their officers were struck down, the bewildered general gave them no orders, sent them no aid; their strength was exhausted by

repeated efforts under the fiery sun, and still, from behind the inaccessible breastwork, the French, steady and almost unharmed, poured a rolling fire upon their defenceless masses. The painful tale must now be told: the English infantry turned and fled. The disorder, in a few minutes, became irretrievable; those who had been foremost in the fierce assault were soon the first in the disgraceful flight. Highlanders and Provincials, Rangers and Grenadiers, scarce looked behind them in their terror, nor saw that no man pursued. In this hour of greatest need, General Abercromby remained at the saw-mills, nearly two miles from the field of battle.

When the fugitives found that the French did not venture to press upon their rear, they in some measure rallied, upon a few still unbroken battalions that were posted around the position by the general. Scarcely, however, had anything of confidence been restored, when an unaccountable command from Abercromby, to retreat to the landing-place, renewed the panic. The soldiers instantly concluded that they were to embark with every speed to escape the pursuit of the victorious enemy, and, breaking from all order and control, crowded towards the boats. Happily the brave Bradstreet still held together a small force, like himself, unshaken by this groundless terror; with prompt decision he threw himself before the landing-place, and would not suffer a man to embark. To this gallant officer may be attributed the preservation of Abercromby's army: had the disordered masses been allowed

to crowd into the boats, thousands must have perished in the waters of the lake. By this wise and spirited step, regularity was, in a little time, again restored, and the troops held their ground for the night.

The loss remains to be recorded: 1,950 of the British army were slain, wounded, and missing; of these, 1,642 were regular troops with a large proportion of officers. The French had nearly three hundred and ninety killed and disabled, but as their heads only were exposed above the breastwork, few of those who were hit recovered. It is unnecessary to speak of their admirable conduct and courage, or of the merit of their chief; their highest praise is recorded with the deeds of those they conquered.

THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM

THE disaster at Ticonderoga, so far from discouraging Mr. Pitt, merely spurred him to greater efforts; and in them he was vigorously seconded by the American colonies. In the summer of the following year, General Wolfe, with some 8,000 men, supported by a powerful fleet under Admirals Saunders and Holmes, made his way up the St. Lawrence, and established himself on the Island of Orleans, immediately below Quebec. At the same time General Amherst, who had superseded Abercromby, led another army of 11,000 men upon Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and Prideaux with a smaller force descended the St. Lawrence to attack Fort Niagara. The idea was that Amherst

and Prideaux should subsequently join hands in an attack on Montreal; and having taken that place, should combine with Wolfe in accomplishing the great objective of the campaign—the capture of Quebec. Amherst captured Ticonderoga and Crown Point, Prideaux was equally successful at Niagara; but owing to want of transport Amherst was unable to reach the St. Lawrence, and as the months passed without the arrival of the expected reinforcements, Wolfe was driven to the conclusion that he must either capture Quebec with the forces at his disposal, or retreat before the approach of winter. To a man of Wolfe's indomitable spirit, the latter was an impossible alternative. Early in the siege he had attacked the French front and left; and although he led his troops in person, the attack had been repulsed, largely owing to the heedless impetuosity of his own men. Now he resolved to attack the French right which, lying on high rocky cliffs above the river, was deemed by Montcalm to be secure.

QUEBEC stands on the slope of the eastern extremity of that lofty range which here forms the left bank of the St. Lawrence; a table-land extends westward for about nine miles from the defences of the city, occasionally wooded and undulating, but from the top of the narrow path to the ramparts, open, and tolerably level; this portion of the heights is called the Plains of Abraham. Wolfe's plan was to ascend this path secretly with his whole army, and make the plains his battle ground. The extraordinary audacity of the enterprise was its safety; the wise and cautious Montcalm had guarded against all the probable

chances of war : he was not prepared against an attempt for which the page of romance can scarcely furnish a parallel.

It was on the 9th of September that Wolfe addressed to the Secretary of State a letter which bears a deep and melancholy interest. His own view of the prospects of the expedition was most gloomy, and he seemed anxious to prepare the public mind in England for his failure. The letter conveys the impression that he only continued his operations to divert the attention of the enemy from other points; it concludes in the following desponding words: "I am so far recovered as to do business, but my constitution is entirely ruined, without the consolation of having done any considerable service to the State, or without any prospect of it." But while he wrote almost in despair, he acted as if he had never doubted of success.

On the evening of the 12th of September the heavier ships of the line moved towards the Beauport shore, anchoring as near the enemy's lines as the depth of water would permit. While daylight yet remained, all the boats of that portion of the fleet were lowered, filled with marines and seamen, and ranged in order, threatening a descent upon the shore. At the same time the remaining ships suddenly hoisted sail, and with a favouring breeze they swept proudly past the batteries of Quebec, and joined Holmes's squadron at Cape Rouge, eight miles above the city. Monckton and Murray, who, with their brigades, still occupied Point

Levi and the village of St. Michaels, now pushed rapidly up to the left bank of the St. Lawrence till they arrived opposite the fleet, and there embarked without being observed by the enemy. At nine o'clock at night the first division of the army, sixteen hundred strong, silently removed into flat-bottomed boats; the soldiers were in high spirits; Wolfe led in person. About an hour before daylight the flotilla fell down with the ebb tide. "Weather favourable; a starlight night."

We must leave Wolfe for awhile to take a brief review of the position of affairs in his enemy's camp. Montcalm's difficulties were also great. He knew not where to turn for a ray of hope, except, indeed, to the now rapidly advancing winter. The toils were spread on every side; the stately fleet riding below the town cut off all supplies from France; the fall of Niagara and of Fort Frontenac broke off the chain of communication with the distant west; Amherst, with an overwhelming force, hung over the weakest point of the Canadian frontier; Montreal, with neither army nor fortification, lay exposed to the British advance. But, worst of all, distrust of his colleagues and contempt of the prowess of his militia paralysed Montcalm's vigour, and destroyed his confidence. "You have sold your country," exclaimed he, in uncontrollable indignation, to M. de Vaudreuil, when the latter opposed his views; "but while I live I will not deliver it up."

Not only provisions but even ammunition were

becoming short in Montcalm's camp : there was no hope of supplies from any quarter. The Lower Town and a large portion of the Upper Town were laid in ruins by the British artillery; the defences, it was true, still remained uninjured; but, except in natural advantages, they were by no means formidable.

One only hope remained to the French general : the winter approached. In a few weeks the northern blast would scare away the stubborn enemy against whom his arms and skill were ineffectual. Could he struggle on a little longer, the fate of Canada might be thrown upon the chances of another campaign, and a turn in European affairs yet preserve the splendid colony of France. " Unless Wolfe lands above the town, and forces me to a battle, I am safe," writes Montcalm. But while, on the night of the 12th of September, he watched in confident expectation the deceitful preparations of the fleet below the town, the ebbing tide silently floated down the British army towards that position, the occupation of which he knew must be his ruin.

Silently and swiftly, unchallenged by the French sentries, Wolfe's flotilla dropt down the stream in the shade of the overhanging cliffs. The rowers scarcely stirred the waters with their oars; the soldiers sat motionless. Not a word was spoken, save by the young general; he, as a midshipman on board his boat afterwards related, repeated in a low voice to the officers by his side Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*; and as he concluded the beautiful verses, said, " Now, gentle-

men, I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec!" But while Wolfe thus, in the poet's words, gave vent to the intensity of his feelings, his eye was constantly bent upon the dark outline of the heights under which he hurried past. He recognized at length the appointed spot, and leaped ashore. Some of the leading boats, conveying the light company of the 78th Highlanders had in the meantime been carried about two hundred yards lower down by the strength of the tide. These Highlanders, under Captain Donald M'Donald, were the first to land. Immediately over their heads hung a woody precipice, without path or track upon its rocky face; at the summit a French sentinel marched to and fro, still unconscious of their presence. Without a moment's hesitation, M'Donald and his men dashed at the height. They scrambled up, holding on by rocks and branches of trees, guided only by the stars that shone over the top of the cliff; half the ascent was already won, when for the first time "Qui vive?" broke the silence of the night. "La France," answered the Highland captain, with ready self-possession, and the sentry shouldered his musket and pursued his round. In a few minutes, however, the rustling of the trees close at hand at length alarmed the French guard; they hastily turned out, fired one irregular volley down the precipice and fled in panic. The captain, M. de Vergor, alone, though wounded, stood his ground; when summoned to surrender, he fired at one of the leading assailants, but was instantly overpowered;

the Highlanders, incensed at his vain valour, tore from his breast a decoration which he bore, and sent him a prisoner to the rear. In the meantime nearly five hundred men landed and made their way up the height; those who had first reached the summit then took possession of the entrenched post at the top of that path which Wolfe had selected for the ascent of his army.

Wolfe, Monckton, and Murray landed with the first division; as fast as each boat was cleared it put back for reinforcements to the ships, which had now also floated down with the tide nearly opposite to the point of disembarkation. The battalions formed on the narrow beach at the foot of the winding path and, as soon as completed, each ascended the cliff, when they again formed upon the plains above. There all was quiet; the light infantry, under Lieutenant-colonel Howe, brother of the gallant Lord Howe who fell at Ticonderoga, had driven away the enemy's picquets. The boats plied busily; company after company was quickly landed, and as soon as the men touched the shore they swarmed up the steep ascent with ready alacrity. When morning broke the whole disposable force of Wolfe's army stood in firm array upon the tableland above the cove. Only one gun, however, could be carried up the hill, and even that was not got into position without incredible difficulty.

After a few minutes' anxious observation of the face of the country, Wolfe marched the army by files to the right in the direction of the city, leaving two companies of the 58th Regiment to

guard the landing-place; he then formed his line of battle upon the Plains of Abraham, and resolved there to cast the die for Canada.

At about six o'clock some parties of the enemy appeared upon the slopes under the ramparts of the city; at seven they mustered in greater force, and brought up two field-guns, which caused some annoyance. Shortly afterwards they threw a body of Canadians and Indians into the brush-wood on the face of the precipice over the river, into a field of corn in front of the 35th Regiment, and into a coppice opposite the British centre; these skirmishers caused considerable mischief, but were speedily routed by Colonel Howe, with a detachment of the 47th. The whole line then received orders to lie upon their arms, while light infantry vedettes covered their position at some distance in advance.

Meanwhile Montcalm had been completely deceived by the demonstrations of the fleet below the town. Through the whole of that anxious night boats were approaching the shore and again retiring, on various points of the line between the Montmorency and the St. Charles. The English ships of war had worked up as near as they could find depth of water, and their guns played incessantly upon the beach, as if to prepare the way for a debarkation. Day broke before Montcalm even suspected that another struggle awaited him on his eastern lines; then, however, a stray cannon shot, and the distant echo of musketry from above the town caught his ear; while he yet doubted, a horseman reached him at full speed with tidings

that the English had landed on the Plains of Abraham. The news spread like lightning through the Canadian camp. Aides-dé-camp galloped to and fro in fiery haste; trumpets and drums aroused the sleeping soldiery. As fast as the battalions could be mustered they were hurried across the valley of the St. Charles, over the bridge, and along the front of the northern ramparts of Quebec to the battle ground. M. de Vaudreuil, with some Canadian militia, was left to guard the lines.

Under some mysterious and incomprehensible impulse, Montcalm at once determined to meet his dangerous enemy in the open field.

Even when the alarming news of Wolfe's landing reached Montcalm, he professed confidence—confidence which he could not have felt. When the position of the English army was pointed out to him, he said, "Yes, I see them where they ought not to be;" and he afterwards added, "If we must fight, I will crush them." He, however, altogether failed to communicate to the Canadian troops the sanguine spirit which he himself professed.

At eight o'clock the heads of French columns began to appear, ascending the hill from the St. Charles to the Plains of Abraham; the only piece of artillery which Wolfe had been able to bring into action then opened with some effect, and caused them slightly to alter their line of march; as they arrived they formed in three separate masses upon a slope to the north-west of the city, where they were sheltered from this solitary but mischievous gun.

At nine o'clock Montcalm moved some distance to the front, and developed his line of battle; at the same time M. de Bougainville, who was hastening down the left bank of the St. Lawrence, made a demonstration with some light cavalry upon Wolfe's extreme left. Townshend checked this movement by throwing the third battalion of the 60th into a line extending from the threatened flank to the post over the landing-place.

Montcalm was already worsted as a general; it was, however, still left him to fight as a soldier. His order of battle was steadily and promptly arrayed. The centre column, under Montcalm in person, consisted of the regiments of Bearn and Guienne, numbering together no more than 720 bayonets; with them were formed 1,200 of the Canadian militia. On the right stood the regiments of La Sarre and Languedoc, and a battalion of the marine or colony troops, in all 1,600 veterans; 400 of the militia, with one field-piece, completed this wing. On the left, the Royal Roussillon, and a battalion of the marine, mustered 1,300 bayonets, while these disciplined regiments were supported by no less than 2,300 of the Canadian levies. The total force, therefore, actually engaged, amounted to 7,520 men, besides Indians; of these, however, not more than one half were regular troops; it was on them the brunt of the battle fell, and almost the whole loss. Wolfe's "field state," on the morning of the 13th of September, showed only 4,828 men of all ranks from the generals downwards, but of these every man was a trained soldier.

The French attacked. At about ten o'clock a crowd of Canadians and Indians emerged from the bush on the slope which falls towards the valley of the St. Charles; as they advanced they opened fire upon the English picquets of the extreme left, and drove them into their supports. Under cover of the cloud of smoke which rose above the scene of this attack, the French veterans of the right wing passed swiftly round the left of Murray's brigade, and turned his flank; then, throwing aside their irregulars, they fell upon Howe's light infantry. This gallant officer felt the importance of his post; the houses and the line of coppice which he occupied formed almost a right angle with the front of the British army, covering it in flank and rear. He was hard pressed; his men fell fast under the overpowering fire of the French, but in a few minutes Townshend, with the 15th, came to his aid; soon afterwards the two battalions of the 60th joined the line, and turned the tide of battle.

In the meantime swarms of skirmishers advanced against the right and centre of the British army; their stinging fire immediately dislodged the few light infantry which Wolfe had posted in his front, and forced them back in confusion upon his main body. This first impression was not without danger; the troops who were in the rear, and could not see the real state of affairs, became alarmed at the somewhat retrograde movements in front. Wolfe perceived this; he hurried along the line, cheered the men by his voice and presence, and admonished them on no account to fire

82 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

without orders. He succeeded; confidence was restored.

The spirited advance of the skirmishers was but the mask of a more formidable movement. The whole of the French centre and left, with loud shouts and arms at the recover, now bore down to the attack. Their light troops then ceased firing, and passed to the rear. As the view cleared their long, unbroken lines were soon rapidly approaching Wolfe's position. When they reached within one hundred and fifty yards they advanced obliquely from the left of each formation, so that the lines assumed the appearance of columns, and chiefly threatened the British right. And now, from flank to flank of the assailing battalions rolled a murderous and incessant fire. The 35th and the Grenadiers fell fast. Wolfe, at the head of the 28th, was struck in the wrist, but not disabled. Wrapping a handkerchief round the wound, he hastened from one rank to another, exhorting the men to be steady and to reserve their fire. No English soldier pulled a trigger: with matchless endurance they sustained the trial. Not a company wavered; their arms shouldered as if on parade, and motionless, save when they closed up the ghastly gaps, they waited the word of command.

When the head of the French attack had reached within forty yards, Wolfe gave the order to "fire." At once the long row of muskets was levelled, and a volley, distinct as a single shot, flashed from the British line. For a moment the advancing columns still pressed on, shivering

like pennons in the fatal storm, but a few paces told how terrible had been the force of the long-suspended blow. Numbers of the French soldiers reeled and fell; some staggered on for a little, then dropped silently aside to die; others burst from the ranks shrieking in agony. The Brigadier de St. Ours was struck dead, and de Senezergues, the second in command, was left mortally wounded upon the field. When the breeze carried away the dense clouds of smoke the assailing battalions stood reduced to mere groups among the bodies of the slain. Never before or since has a deadlier volley burst from British infantry.

Montcalm commanded the attack in person. Not fifteen minutes elapsed since he had first moved on his line of battle, and already all was lost! The Canadian militia, with scarcely an exception, broke and fled. The right wing, which had recoiled before Townshend and Howe, was overpowered by a counter-attack of the 58th and 78th; his veteran battalions of Bearn and Guienne were shattered before his eyes under the British fire; on the left the Royal Roussillon was shrunk to a mere skeleton and, deserted by its provincial allies, could hardly retain the semblance of a formation. But the gallant Frenchman, though ruined, was not dismayed; he rode through the broken ranks, cheered them with his voice, encouraged them by his dauntless bearing, and, aided by a small redoubt, even succeeded in once again presenting a front to his enemy.

Meanwhile, Wolfe's troops had reloaded. He

seized the opportunity of the hesitation in the hostile ranks, and ordered the whole British line to advance. At first they moved forward in majestic regularity, receiving and paying back with deadly interest the volleys of the French. But soon the ardour of the soldiers broke through the restraints of discipline: they increased their pace to a run, rushing over the dying and the dead and sweeping the living enemy off their path. On the extreme right the 35th, under the gallant Colonel Fletcher, carried all before them, and won the white plume which for half-a-century afterwards they proudly bore. Wolfe himself led the 28th and the diminished ranks of the Louisbourg Grenadiers. The 43rd, as yet almost untouched, pressed on in admirable order, worthy of their after-fame in that noble light division which "never gave a foot of ground but by word of command." On the left, the 58th and 78th overcame a stubborn and bloody resistance; more than one hundred of the Highlanders fell dead and wounded, the weak battalion by their side lost a fourth part of their strength in the brief struggle. Just now Wolfe was a second time wounded, in the body, but he dissembled his suffering, for his duty was not yet accomplished; again a ball from the redoubt struck him on the breast; he reeled on one side, but at the moment this was not generally observed. "Support me," said he to a grenadier officer who was close at hand, "that my brave fellows may not see me fall." In a few seconds, however, he sank, and was borne a little to the rear.

The brief struggle fell heavily upon the British, but was ruinous to the French. They wavered under the carnage; the columns which death had disordered were soon broken and scattered. Montcalm, with courage that rose above the wreck of hope, galloped through the groups of his stubborn veterans, who still made head against the advancing enemy, and strove to show a front of battle. His efforts were vain; the head of every formation was swept away before that terrible musketry; in a few minutes the French gave way in all directions. Just then their gallant general fell with a mortal wound; from that time all was utter rout.

The English followed fiercely in the pursuit; the 47th and 58th, with fixed bayonets, pressed on close to the St. Louis and St. John's gates; till the first were checked by grapeshot from the ramparts, and the latter by the artillery of the hulks which were grounded in the river. But foremost in the advance, and most terrible to the flying enemy, were the 78th Highlanders; active and impetuous in their movements, and armed with the broadsword, they supplied in this case the want of cavalry to the British army. Numbers of the French fell beneath their vigorous blows; others saved themselves by timely surrender, piteously craving mercy, and declaring that they had not been at Fort William Henry.¹ The

¹ Montcalm captured Fort William Henry, and promised that the garrison should be allowed to march out unmolested. His Indian allies, however, fell upon the defenceless troops and massacred them. He was not responsible for this breach of faith, which the British bitterly resented.

remainder of Montcalm's right wing only found shelter beyond the bridge over the St. Charles. The survivors of the right and centre soon placed the ramparts of Quebec between themselves and their pursuers.

The battle was now over, but the general of the victorious army had still to guard against another antagonist, as yet untouched and unbroken. It has been related that, at the commencement of the action, the extreme left of the British position had been threatened by some light cavalry—the advance guard of de Bougainville's formidable corps; the main body and their chief had now arrived upon the scene, but so rapid and complete had been the ruin of Montcalm's army that his lieutenant found not a single unbroken company remaining in the field with which to co-operate. He himself, however, was still strong; besides three hundred and fifty cavalry—an arm in which the invaders were altogether deficient—he had with him nearly fifteen hundred men, a large proportion of whom were grenadiers and light infantry.

Townshend, now in command, hastened to recall his disordered battalions, but he determined not to imperil the victory by seeking another engagement with fresh troops. His arrangements were strictly defensive; while re-forming a line of battle, he dispatched the 35th and the 48th with two field-pieces to meet de Bougainville, and if possible check his advance. The demonstration sufficed; the French soldiers, demoralized by the defeat of their general-in-chief, were in no condition to meet a victorious

enemy. They recoiled before the resolute front of the British force, and retreated with precipitation up the left bank of the St. Lawrence.

The loss of the English in this memorable battle amounted to fifty-five killed and six hundred and seven wounded of all ranks. That of the French has never been clearly ascertained, but it was not probably less than fifteen hundred in killed and wounded and prisoners. Moreover, a very large proportion of the Canadian militia dispersed and never rejoined their colours.

While the British troops were carrying all before them, their young general's life was ebbing fast away. When struck for the third time, he sank down; he then supported himself for a few minutes in a sitting posture, with the assistance of Lieutenant Brown, Mr. Henderson, a volunteer, and a private soldier, all of the Grenadier company of the 22nd; Colonel Williamson, of the Royal Artillery, afterwards went to his aid. From time to time Wolfe tried with his faint hand to clear away the death-mist that gathered on his sight; but the effort seemed vain; for presently he lay back, and gave no signs of life beyond a heavy breathing, and occasional groan. Meantime the French had given way, and were flying in all directions. The grenadier officers, seeing this, called out to those around him: "See, they run." The words caught the ear of the dying man; he raised himself, like one aroused from sleep, and asked eagerly, "Who run?" "The enemy, sir," answered the officer; "they give way everywhere." "Go one of you to Colonel Burton," said Wolfe;

88 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR 'CANADA

"tell him to march Webbe's (the 48th) regiment with all speed down to the St. Charles River, to cut off the retreat." His voice grew faint as he spoke, and he turned as if seeking an easier position on his side; when he had given this last order, he seemed to feel that he had done his duty, and added feebly, but distinctly, "Now, God be praised, I die happy." His eyes then closed, and, after a few convulsive movements, he became still. Despite the anguish of his wounds, he died happy, for through the mortal shades that fell upon his soul, there rose, over the unknown world's horizon, the dawn of an eternal morning.

FIGHTING AFTER THE FALL OF QUEBEC

THE condition of Canada, so recently the most important colony of France, had been completely altered by one disastrous campaign. Shut out from Lake Champlain by the loss of Ticonderoga and Crown Point: from the west by the fall of Niagara, while the conquest of Quebec excluded her from the seaboard; all the posts of importance that now remained in French hands were those of Three Rivers, Montreal, Frontenac, Detroit, and Mackinac. The strongest positions had all passed into British hands, and many of the bravest veterans of France had found graves in the land which their valour had vainly striven to defend, or had been borne away as prisoners across the

Atlantic. The condition of the unfortunate inhabitants was most deplorable. Every hamlet had its sick or wounded men. Provisions became scarcer than ever as winter progressed, rose to famine prices, and many people perished from want. At length the farmers would scarcely part with their provisions at any price; still, Bigot and the commissary-general, Cadet, managed by force at one time, by threats and promises at another, to procure a scanty subsistence for the troops at Montreal. Even at Quebec the British soldiers suffered severely owing to the want of fresh provisions. Scurvy broke out amongst them from the almost continual use of salt food and biscuit, and carried off eight hundred men, while it rendered nearly twice that number unfit for duty.

During the winter Murray made every exertion to strengthen the defences at Quebec, and provide for the comfort of the garrison. He erected eight timber redoubts outside the defences towards the Plains of Abraham, and armed them with artillery, laid in eleven months' provisions in the citadel, and repaired five hundred of the injured houses as barracks for his troops. He likewise established outposts at favourable points in the neighbourhood, which proved of considerable advantage in concealing his movements from the enemy, collecting provisions, and confirming the country people in their allegiance, eleven parishes having already placed themselves under the protection of the British.

Meanwhile the French troops at Jacques Cartier

were not idle. They harassed the British outposts whenever an opportunity presented itself, while De Levi, at Montreal, steadily pushed forward preparations for the recapture of Quebec in the spring, before succour could arrive. The moment the weather permitted he directed the French vessels, which had escaped up the river from Saunders' fleet, to be refitted, the small craft to be repaired, and galleys built, on board of which he placed stores and ammunition withdrawn from the forts at St. John's and Chambly, and such other supplies as he could collect.

On the 17th of April, De Levi, having completed his preparations, left Montreal with all his available force, and collecting on his way downwards the several detached corps scattered at the different posts, arrived at Cape Rouge with eight battalions of regular troops, four thousand five hundred strong, six thousand Canadians, of whom two hundred were cavalry, and over two hundred Indians.

On the morning of the 27th, before day, a French artilleryman was rescued from the river off a floating cake of ice, who gave Murray the first intelligence of the approach of a hostile force.

Murray marched out during the day, with all the troops that could be spared from garrison duty, to cover the retreat of his advanced posts at Cape Rouge and elsewhere, a duty he performed with a loss of only two men, and retired on the approach of evening, after breaking down all the bridges. De Levi, however, pushed rapidly forward down the St. Foy road, and at nine o'clock

on the morning of the 28th was within three miles of Quebec. The British general, with an army reduced by disease, desertion and death, to less than three thousand five hundred available men, had already formed the unaccountable resolution of giving the enemy battle. In his subsequent report to the Secretary of State, he excused his unfortunate determination: "having well weighed my peculiar position," said he, "and well knowing that shutting myself within the walls of the city I should risk the whole stake on the chance of defending a wretched fortification, which could not be lessened by an action in the field."

Shortly after daybreak Murray formed his skeleton battalions on the Plains of Abraham, supported by twenty pieces of artillery, planted at the most favourable points. Having completed his order of battle, he rode to the front to reconnoitre the enemy's position. The previous night had been wet, so he found the French occupied in putting their arms into order, and in other respects unprepared, as he supposed, for action. Thinking this a favourable opportunity to assail them, he gave orders for an immediate attack, which was gladly obeyed by his little army, who pushed forward in admirable order over the brow of the heights and into the plains beyond.

For an hour and three quarters did the battle rage with the utmost fury; but finally the numbers of the French prevailed. The British left was thrown into disorder and gave way; the right was also hard pressed, and Murray was finally compelled to retreat, leaving nearly the

92 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

whole of his guns in the hands of the enemy, and three hundred dead upon the field.

Nearly a third of the British army was either killed or wounded; but still the French had dearly purchased their victory by a loss, according to their own admission, of fully eighteen hundred put *hors de combat*. So exasperated were they at the obstinacy of the contest by so small a force that they stained their triumph by refusing quarter to several English officers, and by giving up the wounded, left on the field, to the fury of the Indians. Out of nearly one hundred of these unfortunate men, unavoidably abandoned by Murray in his retreat, only twenty-eight were sent to hospital; the rest were massacred by the savages.

But if the British general had committed an error in hazarding a battle with his inferior force, he amply atoned for it by the resolute manner in which he prepared to defend the city. On the very evening of the battle he issued a general order to his troops, in which he sought to raise their spirits by stating that, "although the morning had been unfortunate to the British arms, yet affairs were not desperate; that a fleet might soon be expected; and it only remained for officers and men patiently to bear the unavoidable fatigues of a siege." The garrison was now reduced to two thousand two hundred effective men, but these were animated by the best spirit, and even the wounded men, who could not walk without crutches, seating themselves on the ramparts, made sandbags for the works, and cartridges

for the cannon. The soldiers' wives, of whom there were nearly five hundred, and all of whom, with scarcely an exception, had enjoyed excellent health during the winter, were also active in attending the wounded and cooking for the troops.

De Levi broke ground on the evening of the 28th, eight hundred yards from the ramparts, but several days elapsed before his batteries, consisting of thirteen guns and two mortars, opened upon the town. Murray had, in the meantime, placed one hundred and thirty-two guns in position on the walls, and as many of the infantry had been trained to act as artillerymen during the preceding winter, he was enabled to keep up a fire which completely overpowered that of the French. But the hopes of the besieged rested chiefly for deliverance on the arrival of the fleet. The French army looked also for aid from an expected squadron. On the 9th of May a frigate was seen rounding the headland of Point Levi, and standing towards the city. For a brief space an intense anxiety had complete possession of besiegers and besieged. But presently a flag is run up the mizen peak of the strange ship, the Union Jack floats boldly out, and a boat puts off for the Lower Town, when the garrison, officers and men, mounted the ramparts in the face of the enemy, and made the welkin ring with hearty British cheers. On the 15th two other frigates arrived, under the command of Commodore Swinton. Next day, the French shipping above the town, consisting of two

94 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

frigates and several armed vessels, were attacked and forced on shore, or destroyed.

The following night the siege was raised, and De Levi precipitately retreated to Montreal, where the last stand was to be made against the efforts of the British.

By the 22nd of July Amherst had assembled an army ten thousand strong, and seven hundred Indians, at Oswego. On the 10th of August he embarked *en route* for Montreal, and arrived at Ogdensburg on the 19th. The French fort at this place was invested next day. When the British batteries opened their fire, it was vigorously replied to by the garrison, who, however, surrendered at discretion on the 23rd. Amherst learned that the Iroquois intended to massacre the French soldiers as soon as they gained admission within the works. This he sternly forbade, and declared that if they attempted such an outrage, he would restrain them by force. They now sullenly threatened to return home, to which course Amherst gave his consent; but at the same time stated that if they committed any acts of violence on their way, he would assuredly chastise them.

Passing down the St. Lawrence, the British army, after losing eighty-four men and several boats in the Cedar Rapids, landed on the Island of Montreal, about nine miles from the town, on the 6th of September. Meanwhile, Murray had left Quebec on the 14th of June, with a force of two thousand four hundred men of all ranks, and ascending the river, subduing some small posts

on its banks, and compelled their inhabitants, whenever practicable; to submit to the authority of Great Britain. At Sorel he found De Bourlemaque posted with four thousand men, and judged it prudent to await the arrival of an expected reinforcement from Louisbourg. This coming up, he pursued his way. On the 7th of September his troops were disembarked, and posted to the north-east of the town. On the following day Colonel Haviland, who had penetrated into Canada by Lake Champlain and the Richelieu, also arrived at Montreal with a force of over three thousand men; and thus an army of nearly sixteen thousand men were assembled under the walls of what might be deemed a defenceless town. On the same day the Marquis de Vaudreuil signed the capitulation which severed Canada from France for ever.

THE INDIAN WAR

CANADA, Cape Breton, and all the other islands at the mouth of the St. Lawrence were ceded to Great Britain by the Treaty of Paris in 1763, and the King of England (George III) pledged himself to govern his new subjects with justice, and to protect the Roman Catholics in their worship as far as the laws of England would allow. No religious restrictions were imposed, beyond the stipulation that the parochial clergy should confine themselves to their clerical duties and take no part in civil affairs. None of the inhabitants of

Canada left the country except a few members of the nobility and some of the officials. The long war seemed to be over, and the Canadians at last appeared to have a period of rest and peace in view. The country was divided into three districts, Quebec, Three Rivers and Montreal, and the military chiefs placed over these divisions endeavoured to soothe the minds of the vanquished by mild government, and an impartial administration of justice. And they so far succeeded that the great majority of the French resigned themselves to the change and became loyal and peaceable subjects of the British Crown.

But if the French were reconciled to the new state of things, their Indian allies by no means shared their feelings. The majority of the native tribes, after their agreement with Champlain in 1701, had become attached to the French, who seemed thoroughly to understand their character, who treated them as friends and allies, and took pains to flatter their vanity and pride. The English, on the other hand, treated the Indians with coldness and neglect, and made no efforts to win their confidence.

THE country was scarcely transferred to the English when smothered murmurs of discontent began to be audible among the Indian tribes. From the head of the Potomac to Lake Superior, and from the Alleghanies to the Mississippi, in every wigwam and hamlet of the forest, a deep-rooted hatred of the English increased with rapid growth. Nor is this to be wondered at. The French had laboured to ingratiate themselves with the Indians; and the slaughter of the

Monongahela, with the horrible devastation of the western frontier, the outrages perpetrated at Oswego, and the massacre at Fort William Henry, bore witness to the success of their efforts. Even the Delawares and Shawanoes, the faithful allies of William Penn, had at length been seduced by their blandishments; and the Iroquois, the ancient enemies of Canada, had half forgotten their former hostility, and well-nigh taken part against the British colonists. The remote nations of the west had also joined in the war, descending in their canoes for hundreds of miles, to fight against the enemies of France.

Under these circumstances, it behoved the English to use the utmost care in their conduct towards the tribes. But even when the conflict with France was impending, and the alliance with the Indians of the last importance, they had treated them with indifference and neglect. They were not likely to adopt a different course now that their friendship seemed a matter of no consequence. In truth, the intentions of the English were soon apparent. In the zeal for retrenchment, which prevailed after the close of hostilities, the presents which it had always been customary to give the Indians, at stated intervals, were either withheld altogether, or doled out with a niggardly and reluctant hand; while, to make the matter worse, the agents and officers of government often appropriated the presents to themselves, and afterwards sold them at an exorbitant price to the Indians.

The English fur trade had never been well

regulated, and it was now in a worse condition than ever. Many of the traders, and those in their employ, were ruffians of the coarsest stamp, who vied with each other in rapacity, violence, and profligacy. They cheated, cursed, and plundered the Indians; offering, when compared with the French traders, who were under better regulation, a most unfavourable example of the character of their nation.

But what most contributed to the growing discontent of the tribes was the intrusion of settlers upon their lands, at all times a fruitful source of Indian hostility. Its effects, it is true, could only be felt by those whose country bordered upon the English settlements; but among these were the most powerful and influential of the tribes. The Delawares, and Shawanoes, in particular, had by this time been roused to the highest pitch of exasperation. Their best lands had been invaded, and all remonstrance had been fruitless. They viewed with wrath and fear the steady progress of the white man, whose settlements had passed the Susquehanna, and were fast extending to the Alleghanies, eating away the forest like a spreading canker. The anger of the Delawares was abundantly shared by their ancient conquerors, the Six Nations. The threatened occupation of Wyoming by settlers from Connecticut gave great umbrage to the confederacy. The Senecas were more especially incensed at English intrusion, since, from their position, they were furthest removed from the soothing influence of Sir William Johnson, and most exposed to the

seductions of the French, while the Mohawks, another member of the confederacy, were justly alarmed at seeing the better part of their lands patented out without their consent.

The discontent of the Indians gave great satisfaction to the French. Canada, it is true, was gone beyond hope of recovery; but they still might hope to revenge its loss. Interest, moreover, as well as passion, prompted them to inflame the resentment of the Indians; for most of the inhabitants of the French settlements upon the lakes and the Mississippi were engaged in the fur trade, and, fearing the English as formidable rivals, they would gladly have seen them driven out of the country. Traders, *habitants*, *coureurs des bois*,¹ and all other classes of this singular population, accordingly dispersed themselves among the villages of the Indians, or held councils with them in the secret places of the woods, urging them to take up arms against the English. They exhibited the conduct of the latter in its worst light, and spared neither misrepresentation nor falsehood. The French declared, in addition, that the King of France had of late years fallen asleep; that, during his slumbers, the English had seized upon Canada; but that he was now awake again, and that his armies were advancing up the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, to drive out the intruders from the country of their red children.

It is difficult to determine which tribe was first to raise the cry of war. There were many who

¹ Woodmen and hunters.

might have done so, for all the savages in the backwoods were ripe for an outbreak, and the movement seemed almost simultaneous. The Delawares and Senecas were the most incensed, and Kiashuta, chief of the latter, was perhaps foremost to apply the torch; but, if this were the case, he touched fire to materials already on the point of igniting. It belonged to a greater chief than he to give method and order to what would else have been a wild burst of fury, and to convert desultory attacks into a formidable and protracted war. But for Pontiac, the whole might have ended in a few troublesome inroads upon the frontier, and a little whooping and yelling under the walls of Fort Pitt.

Pontiac was principal chief of the Ottawas. The Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Pottawattamies, had long been united in a loose kind of confederacy, of which he was the virtual head. Over those around him his authority was almost despotic, and his power extended far beyond the limits of the three united tribes. His influence was great among all the nations of the Illinois country; while, from the sources of the Ohio to those of the Mississippi, and, indeed, to the farthest boundaries of the widespread Algonquin race, his name was known and respected.

Pontiac was now about fifty years old. Until Major Rogers came into the country, he had been, from motives probably both of interest and inclination, a firm friend of the French. Not long before the French war broke out, he had saved the garrison of Detroit from the imminent

peril of an attack from some of the discontented tribes of the north. During the war, he had fought on the side of France. It is said that he commanded the Ottawas at the memorable defeat of Braddock; but at all events, he was treated with much honour by the French officers, and received especial marks of esteem from the Marquis of Montcalm.

When the tide of affairs changed, the subtle and ambitious chief trimmed his bark to the current, and gave the hand of friendship to the English. That he was disappointed in their treatment of him, and in all the hopes that he had formed from their alliance, is sufficiently evident from one of his speeches. A new light soon began to dawn upon his untaught but powerful mind, and he saw the altered posture of affairs under its true aspect.

It was a momentous and gloomy crisis for the Indian race, for never before had they been exposed to such pressing and imminent danger. With the downfall of Canada, the Indian tribes had sunk at once from their position of power and importance. Hitherto the two rival European nations had kept each other in check upon the American continent, and the Indian tribes had, in some measure, held the balance of power between them. To conciliate their good-will and gain their alliance, to avoid offending them by injustice and encroachment, was the policy both of the French and English. But now the face of affairs was changed. The English had gained an undisputed ascendancy, and the Indians, no

longer important as allies, were treated as mere barbarians, who might be trampled upon with impunity. Abandoned to their own feeble resources and divided strength, the tribes must fast recede, and dwindle away before the steady progress of the colonial power.

Revolving these thoughts, and remembering, moreover, that his own ambitious views might be advanced by the hostilities he meditated, Pontiac no longer hesitated. Revenge, ambition, and patriotism wrought upon him alike, and he resolved on war. At the close of the year 1762, he sent out ambassadors to the different nations. They visited the country of the Ohio and its tributaries, passed northward to the region of the upper lakes, and the wild borders of the river Ottawa; and far southward towards the mouth of the Mississippi. Bearing with them the war-belt of wampum,¹ broad and long, as the importance of the message demanded; and the tomahawk stained red, in token of war; they went from camp to camp, and village to village. Wherever they appeared, the sachems² and old men assembled, to hear the words of the great Pontiac. Then the head chief of the embassy flung down the tomahawk on the ground before them, and holding the war-belt in his hand, delivered, with vehement gesture, word for word, the speech with which he was charged. It was heard everywhere with approbation; the belt was accepted, the hatchet snatched up, and the assembled chiefs stood pledged to take part in the war. The blow was

¹ Ornamented deer-skin.

² Principal chiefs.

to be struck at a certain time in the month of May following, to be indicated by the changes of the moon. The tribes were to rise together, each destroying the English garrison in its neighbourhood, and then, with a general rush, the whole were to turn against the settlements of the frontier.

To begin the war was reserved by Pontiac as his own peculiar privilege. With the first opening of spring his preparations were complete. His light-footed messengers, with their wampum belts and gifts of tobacco, visited many a lonely hunting-camp in the gloom of the northern woods, and called chiefs and warriors to attend the general meeting. The appointed spot was on the banks of the little river Ecorces, not far from Detroit.

The council took place on the 27th of April. On that morning, several old men, the heralds of the camp, passed to and fro among the lodges, calling the warriors, in a loud voice, to attend the meeting.

In accordance with the summons, they came issuing from their cabins—the tall, naked figures of the wild Ojibwas, with quivers slung at their backs, and light war-clubs resting in the hollow of their arms; Ottawas, wrapped close in their gaudy blankets; Wyandots, fluttering in painted shirts, their heads adorned with feathers, and their leggings garnished with bells. All were soon seated in a wide circle upon the grass, row within row, a grave and silent assembly. Each savage countenance seemed carved in wood, and none could have detected the deep and fiery passions

hidden beneath that immovable exterior. Pipes with ornamented stems were lighted, and passed from hand to hand.

Then Pontiac rose, and walked forward into the midst of the council. According to Canadian tradition, he was not above the middle height, though his muscular figure was cast in a mould of remarkable symmetry and vigour. His complexion was darker than is usual with his race, and his features, though by no means regular, had a bold and stern expression, while his habitual bearing was imperious and peremptory, like that of a man accustomed to sweep away all opposition by the force of his impetuous will.

Looking round upon his wild auditors, he began to speak, with fierce gesture, and loud, impassioned voice; and at every pause, deep guttural ejaculations of assent and approval responded to his words. Holding out a broad belt of wampum, he told the council that he had received it from their great father, the King of France, in token that he had heard the voice of his red children; that his sleep was at an end; and that his great war-canoes would soon sail up the St. Lawrence, to win back Canada, and wreak vengeance on his enemies. The Indians and their French brethren should fight once more side by side, as they had always fought; they should strike the English as they had struck them many moons ago, when their great army marched down the Monongahela, and they had shot them from their ambush, like a flock of pigeons in the woods.

Many other speeches were doubtless made in

the council. All present were eager to attack the British fort, and Pontiac told them, in conclusion, that on the 2nd of May he would gain admittance with a party of his warriors, on pretence of dancing the calumet dance before the garrison; that they would take note of the strength of the fortification, and, this information gained, he would summon another council to determine the mode of attack.

The assembly now dissolved, and all the evening the women were employed in loading the canoes, which were drawn up on the bank of the stream. The encampments broke up at so early an hour, that when the sun rose, the savage swarm had melted away; the secluded scene was restored to its wonted silence and solitude, and nothing remained but the slender framework of several hundred cabins, with fragments of broken utensils, pieces of cloth, and scraps of hide, scattered over the trampled grass, while the smouldering embers of numberless fires mingled their dark smoke with the white mist which rose from the little river.

Every spring, after the winter hunt was over, the Indians were accustomed to return to their villages, or permanent encampments, in the vicinity of Detroit; and, accordingly, after the council had broken up, they made their appearance as usual about the fort. On the 1st of May, Pontiac came to the gate with forty men of the Ottawa tribe, and asked permission to enter and dance the calumet dance before the officers of the garrison. After some hesitation he was

admitted; and proceeding to the corner of the street, where stood the house of the commandant, Major Gladwyn, he and thirty of his warriors began their dance, each recounting his own valiant exploits, and boasting himself the bravest of mankind. The officers and men gathered around them; while, in the meantime, the remaining ten of the Ottawas strolled about the fort, observing everything it contained. When the dance was over, they all quietly withdrew, not a suspicion of their sinister design having arisen in the minds of the English.

After a few days had elapsed, Pontiac's messengers again passed among the Indian cabins, calling the principal chiefs to another council, in the Pottawattamie village. Here there was a large structure of bark, erected for the public use on occasions like the present. A hundred chiefs were seated around this dusky council-house, the fire in the centre shedding its fitful light upon their dark, naked forms, while the sacred pipe passed from hand to hand. To prevent interruption, Pontiac had stationed young men, as sentinels, near the house. He once more addressed the chiefs, inciting them to hostility against the English, and concluding by the proposal of his plan for destroying Detroit. It was as follows: Pontiac would demand a council with the commandant concerning matters of great importance; and on this pretext he flattered himself that he and his principal chiefs would gain ready admittance within the fort. They were all to carry weapons concealed beneath their blankets. While

in the act of addressing the commandant in the council-room, Pontiac was to make a certain signal, upon which the chiefs were to raise the war-whoop, rush upon the officers present, and strike them down. The other Indians, waiting meanwhile at the gate, or loitering among the houses, on hearing the yells and firing within the building, were to assail the astonished and half-armed soldiers; and thus Detroit would fall an easy prey.

In opening this plan of treachery, Pontiac spoke rather as a counsellor than as a commander. Haughty as he was, he had too much sagacity to wound the pride of a body of men over whom he had no other control than that derived from his personal character and influence. No one was hardy enough to venture opposition to the proposal of their great leader. His plan was eagerly adopted. Deep, hoarse ejaculations of applause echoed his speech; and, gathering their blankets around them, the chiefs withdrew to their respective villages, to prepare for the destruction of the unhappy little garrison.

The garrison of Detroit consisted of a hundred and twenty soldiers, with about forty fur traders and *engagés*;¹ but the latter, as well as the peaceful Canadian inhabitants of the place, could little be trusted, in the event of an Indian outbreak. Two small armed schooners, the *Beaver* and the *Gladwyn*, lay anchored in the stream, and several light pieces of artillery were mounted in the bastions.

¹ Volunteers.

Standing on the water bastion of Detroit, the landscape that presented itself might well remain impressed through life upon the memory. The river, about half-a-mile wide, almost washed the foot of the stockade; and either bank was lined with the white Canadian cottages. The joyous sparkling of the bright blue water; the green luxuriance of the woods; the white dwellings, looking out from the foliage; and, in the distance, the Indian wigwams curling their smoke against the sky—all were mingled in one great scene of wild and rural beauty.

Pontiac was accustomed to spend the early part of the summer upon a small island at the opening of the Lake St. Clair, hidden from view by the high woods that covered the intervening Île au Cochon. His cabin was a small, oven-shaped structure of bark and rushes. Here he dwelt, with his squaws and children; and here, doubtless, he might often have been seen, carelessly reclining on a rush mat, or a bear-skin, like any ordinary warrior. We may fancy the current of his thoughts, the uncurbed passions swelling in his powerful soul, as he revolved the treacheries which, to his savage mind, seemed fair and honourable.

Looking across an intervening arm of the river, Pontiac could see on its eastern bank the numerous lodges of his Ottawa tribesmen, half hidden among the ragged growth of trees and bushes. On the afternoon of the 5th of May, a Canadian woman, the wife of St. Aubin, one of the principal settlers, crossed over from the western side, and visited

the Ottawa village, to obtain from the Indians a supply of maple sugar and venison. She was surprised at finding several of the warriors engaged in filing off the muzzles of their guns, so as to reduce them, stock and all, to the length of about a yard. Returning home in the evening, she mentioned what she had seen to several of her neighbours. Upon this, one of them, the blacksmith of the village, remarked that many of the Indians had lately visited his shop, and attempted to borrow files and saws for a purpose which they would not explain. These circumstances excited the suspicion of the experienced Canadians. M. Gouin, an old and wealthy settler, went to the commandant, and conjured him to stand upon his guard; but Gladwyn, a man of fearless temper, gave no heed to the friendly advice.

On the afternoon of the 6th a young Ojibwa girl, known to the garrison, came to the fort, and repaired to Gladwyn's quarters.

"To-morrow," she said, "Pontiac will come to the fort with sixty of his chiefs. Each will be armed with a gun, cut short, and hidden under his blanket. Pontiac will demand to hold a council; and after he has delivered his speech, he will offer a peace-belt of wampum, holding it in a reversed position. This will be the signal of attack. The chiefs will spring up and fire upon the officers, and the Indians in the street will fall upon the garrison. Every Englishman will be killed, but not the scalp of a single Frenchman will be touched."

Gladwyn was an officer of signal courage and

address. He thanked the girl, and, promising a rich reward, told her to go back to her village, that no suspicion might be kindled against her. Every preparation was made to meet the sudden emergency. Half the garrison were ordered under arms, and all the officers prepared to spend the night upon the ramparts.

The night passed without alarm. The sun rose upon fresh fields and newly budding woods, and scarcely had the morning mists dissolved, when the garrison could see a fleet of birch canoes crossing the river from the eastern shore, within range of cannon shot above the fort. Only two or three warriors appeared in each, but all moved slowly, and seemed deeply laden. In truth, they were full of savages, lying flat on their faces, that their numbers might not excite the suspicion of the English.

The whole garrison was ordered under arms. The English fur traders closed their storehouses and armed their men, and all in cool confidence stood waiting the result.

At ten o'clock, Pontiac, with his treacherous followers, reached the fort, and the gateway was thronged with their savage faces. All were wrapped to the throat in coloured blankets. Some were crested with hawk, eagle, or raven plumes; others had shaved their heads, leaving only the fluttering scalp-lock on the crown; while others, again, wore their long black hair flowing loosely at their backs, or wildly hanging about their brows like a lion's mane. Their bold yet crafty features, their cheeks besmeared with ochre and vermillion,

white lead and soot, their keen, deep-set eyes gleaming in their sockets, like those of rattlesnakes, gave them an aspect grim, uncouth, and horrible. For the most part, they were tall, strong men, and all had a gait and bearing of peculiar stateliness.

As Pontiac entered, it is said that he started, and that a deep ejaculation half escaped from his broad chest. Well might his stoicism fail, for at a glance he read the ruin of his plot. On either hand, within the gateway, stood ranks of soldiers and hedges of glittering steel. The swarthy, half-wild *engagés* of the fur traders, armed to the teeth, stood in groups at the street corners, and the measured tap of a drum fell ominously on the ear. Soon regaining his composure, Pontiac strode forward into the narrow street; and the chiefs filed after him in silence, while the scared faces of women and children looked out from the windows as they passed. Their rigid muscles betrayed no sign of emotion; yet, looking closely, one might have seen their small eyes glance from side to side with restless scrutiny.

Traversing the entire width of the little town, they reached the door of the council-house, a large building standing near the margin of the river. Entering, they saw Gladwyn, with several of his officers, seated in readiness to receive them, and the observant chiefs did not fail to remark that every Englishman wore a sword at his side and a pair of pistols in his belt. The conspirators eyed each other with uneasy glances. "Why," demanded Pontiac, "do I see so many of my

father's young men standing in the street with their guns?" Gladwyn replied through his interpreter, La Butte, that he had ordered the soldiers under arms for the sake of exercise and discipline. With much delay, and many signs of distrust, the chiefs at length sat down on the mats prepared for them; and after the customary pause, Pontiac rose to speak. Holding in his hand the wampum belt which was to have given the fatal signal, he addressed the commandant, professing strong attachment to the English, and declaring, in Indian phrase, that he had come to smoke the pipe of peace, and brighten the chain of friendship. The officers watched him keenly as he uttered these hollow words, fearing lest, though conscious that his designs were suspected, he might still attempt to accomplish them. And once, it is said, he raised the wampum belt as if about to give the signal of attack. But at that instant Gladwyn signed slightly with his hand. The sudden clash of arms sounded from the passage without, and a drum rolling the charge filled the council-room with its stunning din. At this, Pontiac stood like one confounded. Some writers will have it that Gladwyn, rising from his seat, drew the chief's blanket aside, exposed the hidden gun, and sternly rebuked him for his treachery. But the commandant wished only to prevent the consummation of the plot, without bringing on an open rupture. His own letters affirm that he and his officers remained seated as before. Pontiac, seeing his unruffled brow and his calm eye fixed steadfastly upon him, knew not what to think,



PONTIAC ADDRESSING THE GARRISON OF DETROIT.

and soon sat down in amazement and perplexity. Another pause ensued, and Gladwyn commenced a brief reply. He assured the chiefs that friendship and protection should be extended towards them as long as they continued to deserve it, but threatened ample vengeance for the first act of aggression. The council then broke up; but before leaving the room, Pontiac told the officers that he would return in a few days, with his squaws and children, for he wished that they should all shake hands with their fathers the English. To this new piece of treachery Gladwyn deigned no reply. The gates of the fort, which had been closed during the conference, were again flung open, and the baffled savages were suffered to depart, rejoiced, no doubt, to breathe once more the free air of the open fields.

Balked in his treachery, the great chief withdrew to his village, enraged and mortified, yet still resolved to persevere. That Gladwyn had suffered him to escape, was to his mind an ample proof either of cowardice or ignorance. The latter supposition seemed the more probable, and he resolved to visit the English once more, and convince them, if possible, that their suspicions against him were unfounded. Early on the following morning, he repaired to the fort with three of his chiefs, bearing in his hand the sacred calumet, or pipe of peace, the bowl carved in stone, and the stem adorned with feathers. Offering it to the commandant, he addressed him and his officers to the following effect: "My fathers, evil birds have sung lies in your ear. We that stand

114 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

before you are friends of the English. We love them as our brothers, and, to prove our love, we have come this day to smoke the pipe of peace."

Early on the following morning, Monday, the 9th of May, the French inhabitants went in procession to the principal church of the settlement, which stood near the river bank, about half-a-mile above the fort. Having heard mass, they all returned before eleven o'clock, without discovering any signs that the Indians meditated an immediate act of hostility. Scarcely, however, had they done so, when the common behind the fort was once more thronged with Indians of all the four tribes; and Pontiac, advancing from among the multitude, approached the gate. It was closed and barred against him. Pontiac shouted to the sentinels, and demanded why he was refused admittance. Gladwyn himself replied, that the great chief might enter, if he chose, but that the crowd he had brought with him must remain outside. Pontiac rejoined, that he wished all his warriors to enjoy the fragrance of the friendly calumet. Gladwyn's answer was more concise than courteous, and imported that he would have none of his rabble in the fort. Thus repulsed, Pontiac threw off the mask which he had worn so long. With a grin of hate and rage, he turned abruptly from the gate, and strode towards his followers, who, in great multitudes, lay flat upon the ground, just beyond reach of gunshot. At his approach, they all leaped up and ran off.

When Pontiac saw his plan defeated, he turned

towards the shore, and no man durst approach him, for he was terrible in his rage. Pushing a canoe from the bank, he urged it, with vigorous strokes, against the current, towards the Ottawa village, on the farther side. As he drew near, he shouted to the inmates. None remained in the lodges but women, children, and old men, who all came flocking out at the sound of his imperious voice. Pointing across the water, he ordered that all should prepare to move the camp to the western shore, that the river might no longer interpose a barrier between his followers and the English. The squaws laboured with eager alacrity to obey him. Provision, utensils, weapons, and even the bark covering to the lodges, were carried to the shore; and before evening, all was ready for embarkation. Meantime, the warriors had come dropping in, until, at nightfall, nearly all had returned. Then Pontiac, hideous in his war-paint, leaped into the central area of the village. Brandishing his tomahawk, and stamping on the ground, he recounted his former exploits, and denounced vengeance on the English. The Indians flocked about him. Warrior after warrior caught the fierce contagion, and soon the ring was filled with dancers, circling round and round with frantic gesture, and startling the distant garrison with unearthly yells.

Every Englishman in the fort, whether trader or soldier, was now ordered under arms. No man lay down to sleep, and Gladwyn himself walked the ramparts throughout the night.

All was quiet till the approach of dawn. But

116 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

as the first dim redness tinged the east, and fields and woods grew visible in the morning twilight, suddenly the war-whoop rose on every side at once. As wolves assail the wounded bison, howling their gathering cries across the wintry prairie, so the fierce Indians, pealing their terrific yells, came bounding naked to the assault. The men hastened to their posts. And truly it was time, for not the Ottawas alone, but the whole barbarian swarm, Wyandots, Pottawattamies, and Ojibwas, were upon them, and bullets rapped hard and fast against the palisades. The soldiers looked from the loopholes, thinking to see their assailants gathering for a rush against the feeble barrier. But, though their clamours filled the air, and their guns blazed thick and hot, yet very few were visible. Some were ensconced behind barns and fences, some skulked among bushes, and some lay flat in hollows of the ground; while those who could find no shelter were leaping about with the agility of monkeys, to dodge the shot of the fort. Each had filled his mouth with bullets, for the convenience of loading, and each was charging and firing without suspending these agile gymnastics for a moment. There was one low hill, at no great distance from the fort, behind which countless black heads of Indians alternately appeared and vanished, while, all along the ridge, their guns emitted incessant white puffs of smoke. Every loophole was a target for their bullets; but the fire was returned with steadiness, and not without effect. The Canadian *engagés* of the fur traders retorted the Indian war-whoops

with outcries not less discordant, while the British and provincials paid back the clamour of the enemy with musket and rifle balls. Within half gunshot of the palisade was a cluster of out-buildings, behind which a host of Indians found shelter. A cannon was brought to bear upon them, loaded with red-hot spikes. They were soon wrapped in flames, upon which the disconcerted savages broke away in a body, and ran off yelping, followed by a shout of laughter from the soldiers.

For six hours the attack was unabated; but as the day advanced, the assailants grew weary of their futile efforts. Their fire slackened, their clamours died away, and the garrison was left once more in peace, though from time to time a solitary shot, or lonely whoop, still showed the presence of some lingering savage, loath to be balked of his revenge. Among the garrison, only five men had been wounded, while the cautious enemy had suffered but trifling loss.

Gladwyn was still convinced that the whole affair was but a sudden ebullition, which would soon subside; and being, moreover, in great want of provision, he resolved to open negotiations with the Indians, under cover of which he might obtain the necessary supplies. The interpreter, La Butte, who, like most of his countrymen, might be said to hold a neutral position between the English and the Indians, was dispatched to the camp of Pontiac to demand the reasons of his conduct, and declare that the commandant was ready to redress any real grievance of which he

might complain. At La Butte's appearance, all the chiefs withdrew to consult among themselves. They returned after a short debate, and Pontiac declared that, out of their earnest desire for firm and lasting peace, they wished to hold council with their English fathers themselves. With this view, they were expressly desirous that Major Campbell, second in command, should visit their camp. This veteran officer, from his just, upright, and manly character, had gained the confidence of the Indians. To the Canadians the proposal seemed a natural one, and returning to the fort, they laid it before the commandant. Gladwyn suspected treachery, but Major Campbell urgently asked permission to comply with the request of Pontiac. He felt, he said, no fear of the Indians, with whom he had always maintained the most friendly terms. Gladwyn, with some hesitation, acceded, and Campbell left the fort, accompanied by a junior officer, Lieutenant M'Dougal, and attended by La Butte and several other Canadians.

In the meantime, M. Gouin, anxious to learn what was passing, had entered the Indian camp, and, moving from lodge to lodge, soon saw and heard enough to convince him that the two British officers were advancing into the lion's jaws. He hastened to dispatch two messengers to warn them of the peril. The party had scarcely left the gate when they were met by these men, breathless with running; but the warning came too late. Once embarked on the embassy, the officers would not be diverted from it; and passing up the river road, they approached the little

wooden bridge that led over Parent's Creek. Crossing this bridge, and ascending a rising ground beyond, they saw before them the wide-spread camp of the Ottawas. A dark multitude gathered along its outskirts, and no sooner did they recognize the red uniform of the officers, than they all raised at once a horrible outcry of whoops and howlings. Indeed, they seemed disposed to give the ambassadors the reception usually accorded to captives taken in war; for the women seized sticks, stones, and clubs, and ran towards Campbell and his companions, as if to make them pass the cruel ordeal of running the gauntlet. Pontiac came forward, and his voice allayed the tumult. He shook the officers by the hand, and, turning, led the way through the camp. It was a confused assemblage of huts, chiefly of a conical or half-spherical shape, and constructed of a slender framework covered with rush mats or sheets of birch bark. Many of the graceful birch canoes, used by the Indians of the upper lakes, were lying here and there among paddles, fish-spears, and blackened kettles slung above the embers of the fires. The camp was full of lean, wolfish dogs, who, roused by the clamour of their owners, kept up a discordant baying as the strangers passed. Pontiac paused before the entrance of a large lodge, and, entering, pointed to several mats placed on the ground, at the side opposite the opening. Here, obedient to his signal, the two officers sat down. Instantly the lodge was thronged with savages. Some, and these were for the most part chiefs, or old men, seated them-

selves on the ground before the strangers, while the remaining space was filled by a dense crowd, crouching or standing erect, and peering over each other's shoulders. At their first entrance, Pontiac had spoken a few words. A pause then ensued, broken at length by Campbell, who from his seat addressed the Indians in a short speech. It was heard in perfect silence, and no reply was made. For a full hour, the unfortunate officers saw before them the same concourse of dark, inscrutable faces, bending an unwavering gaze upon them. Some were passing out, and others coming in to supply their places, and indulge their curiosity by a sight of the Englishmen. At length, Major Campbell, conscious, no doubt, of the danger in which he was placed, resolved fully to ascertain his true position, and rising to his feet, declared his intention of returning to the fort. Pontiac made a sign that he should resume his seat. "My father," he said, "will sleep to-night in the lodges of his red children." The grey-haired soldier and his companion were betrayed into the hands of their enemies.

Many of the Indians were eager to kill the captives on the spot, but Pontiac would not carry his treachery so far. He protected them from injury and insult, and conducted them to the house of M. Meloche, near Parent's Creek, where good quarters were assigned them, and as much liberty allowed as was consistent with safe custody.

On the morning after the detention of the officers, Pontiac crossed over, with several of his chiefs, to the Wyandot village. A part of this

tribe, influenced by Father Pothier, their Jesuit priest, had refused to take up arms against the English; but, being now threatened with destruction if they should longer remain neutral, they were forced to join the rest.

Having secured these new allies, Pontiac prepared to resume his operations with fresh vigour; and to this intent, he made an improved disposition of his forces. Some of the Pottawattamies were ordered to lie in wait along the river bank, below the fort; while others concealed themselves in the woods, in order to intercept any Englishman who might approach by land or water. Another band of the same tribe were to conceal themselves in the neighbourhood of the fort, when no general attack was going forward, in order to shoot down any soldier or trader who might chance to expose his person. On the 12th of May, when these arrangements were complete, the Indians once more surrounded the fort, firing upon it from morning till night.

Time passed on, and brought little change and no relief to the harassed and endangered garrison. Day after day the Indians continued their attacks, until their war-cries and the rattle of their guns became familiar sounds.

For many weeks, no man lay down to sleep, except in his clothes, and with his weapons by his side. Parties of volunteers sallied, from time to time, to burn the outbuildings which gave shelter to the enemy. They cut down orchard trees, and levelled fences, until the ground about the fort was clear and open, and the enemy had

no cover left from whence to fire. The two vessels in the river, sweeping the northern and southern curtains of the works with their fire, deterred the Indians from approaching those points, and gave material aid to the garrison. Still, worming their way through the grass, sheltering themselves behind every rising ground, the pertinacious savages would crawl close to the palisade, and shoot arrows, tipped with burning tow, upon the roofs of the houses; but cisterns and tanks of water were everywhere provided against such an emergency, and these attempts proved abortive.

Meanwhile, great efforts were made to procure a supply of provisions. Every house was examined, and all that could serve for food, even grease and tallow, was collected and placed in the public storehouse, compensation having first been made to the owners. Notwithstanding these precautions, Detroit must have been abandoned or destroyed, but for the assistance of a few friendly Canadians, and especially of M. Baby, a prominent *habitant*, who lived on the opposite side of the river, and provided the garrison with cattle, hogs, and other supplies. These, under cover of night, were carried from his farm to the fort in boats, the Indians long remaining ignorant of what was going forward.

They, on their part, began to suffer from hunger. Thinking to have taken Detroit at a single stroke, they had neglected, with their usual improvidence, to provide against the exigencies of a siege; and now, in small parties, they would visit the Canadian families along the river shore, passing from

house to house, demanding provisions, and threatening violence in case of refusal.

While perils were thickening around the garrison of Detroit, the British commander-in-chief at New York remained ignorant of their danger. Indeed, an unwonted quiet had prevailed, of late, along the borders and about the neighbouring forts. With the opening of spring, a strong detachment had been sent up the lakes, with a supply of provisions and ammunition for the use of Detroit and the other western posts. The boats of this convoy were now pursuing their course along the northern shore of Lake Erie; and Gladwyn's garrison, aware of their approach, awaited their arrival with an anxiety which every day increased.

Day after day passed on, and the red cross of St. George still floated above Detroit. The keen-eyed watchfulness of the Indians had never abated; and woe to the soldier who showed his head above the palisades, or exposed his person before a loophole. Strong in his delusive hope of French assistance, Pontiac had sent messengers to M. Neyon, commandant at the Illinois, earnestly requesting that a force of regular troops might be sent to his assistance; and Gladwyn, on his side, had ordered one of the vessels to Niagara, to hasten forward the expected convoy. The schooner set sail; but on the next day, as she lay becalmed at the entrance of Lake Erie, a multitude of canoes suddenly darted out upon her from the neighbouring shores. In the prow of the foremost the Indians had placed their prisoner, Major

124 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

Campbell, with the dastardly purpose of interposing him as a screen between themselves and the fire of the English. But the brave old man called out to the crew to do their duty, without regard to him. Happily, at that moment a fresh breeze sprang up; the flapping sails stretched to the wind, and the schooner bore prosperously on her course towards Niagara, leaving the savage flotilla far behind.

The fort, or rather town, of Detroit had, by this time, lost its wonted vivacity and life. Its narrow streets were gloomy and silent. Here and there strolled a Canadian, in red cap and gaudy sash; the weary sentinel walked to and fro before the quarters of the commandant; an officer, perhaps, passed along with rapid step and anxious face; or an Indian girl, the mate of some soldier or trader, moved silently by, in her finery of beads and vermilion. Such an aspect as this the town must have presented on the morning of the 30th of May, when, at about nine o'clock, the voice of the sentinel sounded from the south-east bastion, and loud exclamations, in the direction of the river, roused Detroit from its lethargy. Instantly the place was astir. Soldiers, traders, and *habitants*, hurrying through the water-gate, thronged the canoe wharf and the narrow strand without. The half-wild *coureurs des bois*, the tall and sinewy provincials, and the stately British soldiers, stood crowded together, their uniforms soiled and worn, and their faces haggard with unremitted watching. Yet all alike wore an animated and joyous look. The long-expected

convoy was full in sight. On the farther side of the river, at some distance below the fort, a line of boats was rounding the woody projection, then called Montreal Point, their oars flashing in the sun, and the red flag of England flying from the stern of the foremost. The toils and dangers of the garrison were drawing to an end. With one accord, they broke into three hearty cheers, again and again repeated, while a cannon, glancing from the bastion, sent its loud voice of defiance to the enemy, and welcome to approaching friends. But suddenly every cheek grew pale with horror. Dark naked figures were seen rising, with wild gesture, in the boats, while, in place of the answering salute, the distant yell of the war-whoop fell faintly on their ears. The convoy was in the hands of the enemy. The boats had all been taken, and the troops of the detachment slain or made captive. Officers and men stood gazing in mournful silence, when an incident occurred which caused them to forget the general calamity in the absorbing interest of the moment.

Leaving the disappointed garrison, we will pass over to the principal victims of this deplorable misfortune. In each of the boats, of which there were eighteen, two or more of the captured soldiers, deprived of their weapons, were compelled to act as rowers, guarded by several armed savages, while many other Indians, for the sake of further security, followed the boats along the shore. In the foremost, as it happened, there were four soldiers and only three Indians. The larger of the two vessels still lay anchored in the

stream, about a bow-shot from the fort, while her companion, as we have seen, had gone down to Niagara to hasten up this very reinforcement. As the boat came opposite this vessel, the soldier who acted as steersman conceived a daring plan of escape. The principal Indian sat immediately in front of another of the soldiers. The steersman called, in English, to his comrade to seize the savage and throw him overboard. The man answered that he was not strong enough; on which the steersman directed him to change places with him, as if fatigued with rowing, a movement which would excite no suspicion on the part of their guard. As the bold soldier stepped forward, as if to take his companion's oar, he suddenly seized the Indian by the hair, and gripping with the other hand the girdle at his waist, lifted him by main force, and flung him into the river. The boat rocked till the water surged over her gunwale. The Indian held fast to his enemy's clothes, and, drawing himself upward as he trailed alongside, stabbed him again and again with his knife, and then dragged him overboard. Both went down the swift current, rising and sinking; and, as some relate, perished, grappled in each other's arms. The two remaining Indians leaped out of the boat. The prisoners turned, and pulled for the distant vessel, shouting aloud for aid. The Indians on shore opened a heavy fire upon them, and many canoes paddled swiftly in pursuit. The men strained with desperate strength. A fate inexpressibly horrible was the alternative. The bullets hissed thickly around their heads; one of

them was soon wounded, and the light birch canoes gained on them with fearful rapidity. Escape seemed hopeless, when the report of a cannon burst from the side of the vessel. The ball flew close past the boat, beating the water in a line of foam, and narrowly missing the foremost canoe. At this, the pursuers drew back in dismay; and the Indians on shore, being further saluted by a second shot, ceased firing, and scattered among the bushes. The prisoners soon reached the vessel, where they were greeted as men snatched from the jaws of fate. "a living monument," writes an officer of the garrison, "that Fortune favours the brave."

On the 19th of June, a rumour reached the beleaguered garrison that one of the vessels had been seen near Turkey Island, some miles below the fort, but that, the wind failing her, she had dropped down with the current, to wait a more favourable opportunity. It may be remembered that this vessel had, several weeks before, gone down Lake Erie to hasten the advance of Cuyler's expected detachment. Passing these troops on her way, she had held her course to Niagara; and here she had remained until the return of Cuyler, with the remnant of his men, made known the catastrophe that had befallen him. This officer, and the survivors of his party, with a few other troops spared from the garrison of Niagara, were ordered to embark on board of her, and make the best of their way back to Detroit. They had done so, and now, as we have seen, were almost within sight of the fort; but the critical part of

128 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

the undertaking yet remained. The river channel was in some places narrow, and more than eight hundred Indians were on the alert to intercept their passage.

For several days, the officers at Detroit heard nothing further of the vessel, when, on the twenty-third, a great commotion was visible among the Indians, large parties of whom were seen to pass along the outskirts of the woods, behind the fort. The cause of these movements was unknown till evening, when M. Baby came in with intelligence that the vessel was again attempting to ascend the river, and that all the Indians had gone to the attack. Upon this, two cannon were fired, that those on board might know that the fort still held out.

The schooner, late that afternoon, began to move slowly upward, with a gentle breeze, between the main shore and the long-extended margin of Fighting Island. About sixty men were crowded on board, of whom only ten or twelve were visible on deck, the officer having ordered the rest to lie hidden below, in hopes that the Indians, encouraged by this apparent weakness, might make an open attack. Just before reaching the narrowest part of the channel, the wind died away, and the anchor was dropped. Immediately above, and within gunshot of the vessel, the Indians had made a breastwork of logs, carefully concealed by bushes, on the shore of Turkey Island. Here they lay in force, waiting for the schooner to pass. Ignorant of this, but still cautious and wary, the crew kept a

strict watch from the moment the sun went down.

Hours wore on, and nothing had broken the deep repose of the night. The current gurgled with a monotonous sound around the bows of the schooner, and on either hand the wooded shores lay amid the obscurity, black and silent as the grave. At length the sentinel could discern, in the distance, various moving objects upon the dark surface of the water. The men were ordered up from below, and all took their posts in perfect silence. The blow of a hammer on the mast was to be the signal to fire. The Indians, gliding stealthily over the water in their birch canoes, had, by this time, approached within a few rods of their fancied prize, when suddenly the dark side of the slumbering vessel burst into a blaze of cannon and musketry, which illumined the night like a flash of lightning. Grape and musket shot flew tearing among the canoes, destroying several of them, killing fourteen Indians, wounding as many more, and driving the rest in consternation to the shore. Recovering from their surprise, they began to fire upon the vessel from behind their breastwork; upon which she weighed anchor, and dropped down once more beyond their reach, into the broad river below. Several days afterwards she again attempted to ascend. This time she met with better success; for, though the Indians fired at her constantly from the shore, no man was hurt, and at length she left behind her the perilous channels of the islands. As she passed the Wyandot village, she sent a shower

130 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

of grape among its yelping inhabitants, by which several were killed; and then, furling her sails, lay peacefully at anchor by the side of her companion vessel, abreast of the fort.

The schooner brought to the garrison a much-needed supply of men, ammunition, and provision. She brought, also, the interesting and important tidings that peace was at length concluded between France and England. The momentous struggle of the French war, which had shaken North America since the year 1755, had indeed been virtually closed by the victory on the Plains of Abraham, and the junction of the three British armies at Montreal. Yet, up to this time, its embers had continued to burn, till, at length, peace was completely established by formal treaty between the hostile powers. France resigned her ambitious project of empire in America, and ceded Canada and the region of the lakes to her successful rival. By this treaty, the Canadians of Detroit were placed in a new position. Hitherto they had been, as it were, prisoners on capitulation, neutral spectators of the quarrel between their British conquerors and the Indians; but now their allegiance was transferred from the crown of France to that of Britain, and they were subjects of the English king.

The two armed schooners, anchored opposite the fort, were now become objects of awe and aversion to the Indians. This is not to be wondered at, for, besides aiding in the defence of the place, by sweeping two sides of it with their fire, they often caused great terror and

annoyance to the besiegers. Several times they had left their anchorage, and, taking up a convenient position, had battered the Indian camps and villages with no little effect. Once in particular—and this was the first attempt of the kind—Gladwyn himself, with several of his officers, had embarked on board the smaller vessel, while a fresh breeze was blowing from the north-west. The Indians, on the banks, stood watching her as she tacked from shore to shore, and pressed their hands against their mouths in amazement, thinking that magic power alone could enable her thus to make her way against wind and current. Making a long reach from the opposite shore, she came on directly towards the camp of Pontiac, her sails swelling, her masts leaning over till the black muzzles of her guns almost touched the river. The Indians watched her in astonishment. On she came, till their fierce hearts exulted in the idea that she would run ashore within their clutches, when suddenly a shout of command was heard on board, her progress was arrested, she rose upright, and her sails flapped and fluttered as if tearing loose from their fastenings. Steadily she came round, broadside to the shore; then, leaning once more to the wind, bore away gallantly on the other tack. She did not go far. The wondering spectators, quite at a loss to understand her movements, soon heard the hoarse rattling of her cable, as the anchor dragged it out, and saw her furling her vast white wings. As they looked unsuspectingly on, a puff of smoke was emitted from her side; a loud report followed,

then another and another; and the balls, rushing over their heads, flew through the midst of their camp, and tore wildly among the thick forest-trees beyond. All was terror and consternation. The startled warriors bounded away on all sides; the squaws snatched up their children, and fled screaming; and, with a general chorus of yells, the whole encampment scattered in such haste, that little damage was done, except knocking to pieces their frail cabins of bark.

This attack was followed by others of a similar kind; and now the Indians seemed resolved to turn all their energies to the destruction of the vessel which caused them such annoyance. On the night of the 10th of July, they sent down a blazing raft, formed of two boats secured together with a rope, and filled with pitch pine, birch bark, and other combustibles, which, by good fortune, missed the vessel, and floated down the stream without doing injury. All was quiet throughout the following night; but about two o'clock on the morning of the 12th, the sentinel on duty saw a glowing spark of fire on the surface of the river, at some distance above. It grew larger and brighter; it rose in a forked flame, and at length burst forth into a broad conflagration. In this instance, too, fortune favoured the vessel; for the raft, which was larger than the former, passed down between her and the fort, brightly gilding her tracery of ropes and spars, lighting up the old palisades and bastions of Detroit with the clearness of day, disclosing the white Canadian farms and houses along the shore, and revealing the dusky

margin of the forest behind. It showed, too, a dark group of naked spectators, who stood on the bank to watch the effect of their artifice, when a cannon flashed, a loud report broke the stillness, and before the smoke of the gun had risen, these curious observers had vanished. The raft floated down, its flames crackling and glaring wide through the night, until it was burnt to the water's edge, and its last hissing embers were quenched in the river.

Though twice defeated, the Indians would not abandon their plan, but soon after this second failure, began another raft, of different construction from the former, and so large that they thought it certain to take effect. Gladwyn, on his part, provided boats which were moored by chains at some distance above the vessels, and made other preparations of defence, so effectual that the Indians, after working four days upon the raft, gave over their undertaking as useless.

It was now between two and three months since the siege began; and if one is disposed to think slightly of the warriors whose numbers could avail so little against a handful of half-starved English and provincials, he has only to recollect that where barbarism has been arrayed against civilization, disorder against discipline, and ungoverned fury against considerate valour, such has seldom failed to be the result.

At the siege of Detroit, the Indians displayed a high degree of comparative steadiness and perseverance; and their history cannot furnish another instance of so large a force persisting so

long in the attack of a fortified place. Their good conduct may be ascribed to their deep rage against the English, to their hope of speedy aid from the French, and to the controlling spirit of Pontiac, which held them to their work. The Indian is but ill qualified for such attempts, having too much caution for an assault by storm, and too little patience for a blockade. The Wyandots and Pottawattamies had shown, from the beginning, less zeal than the other nations; and now, like children, they began to tire of the task they had undertaken. A deputation of the Wyandots came to the fort, and begged for peace, which was granted them; but when the Pottawattamies came on the same errand, they insisted, as a preliminary, that some of their people, who were detained prisoners with the English, should first be given up. Gladwyn demanded, on his part, that the English captives known to be in their village should be brought to the fort, and three of them were accordingly produced. As these were but a small part of the whole, the deputies were sharply rebuked for their duplicity, and told to go back for the rest. They withdrew, angry and mortified; but, on the following day, a fresh deputation of chiefs made their appearance, bringing with them six prisoners. Having repaired to the council-room, they were met by Gladwyn, attended only by one or two officers. The Indians detained in the fort were about to be given up, and a treaty concluded, when one of the prisoners declared that there were several others still remaining in the Pottawattamie village.

Upon this, the conference was broken off, and the deputies ordered instantly to depart. On being thus a second time defeated, they were goaded to such a pitch of rage that, as afterwards became known, they formed the desperate resolution of killing Gladwyn on the spot, and then making their escape in the best way they could; but, happily, at that moment the commandant observed an Ottawa among them, and, resolving to seize him, called upon the guard without to assist in doing so. A file of soldiers entered, and the chiefs, seeing it impossible to execute their design, withdrew from the fort, with black and sullen brows. A day or two afterwards, however, they returned with the rest of the prisoners, on which peace was granted them, and their people set at liberty.

From the time when peace was concluded with the Wyandots and Pottawattamies until the end of July, little worthy of notice took place at Detroit. The fort was still watched closely by the Ottawas and Ojibwas, who almost daily assailed it with petty attacks. In the meantime, unknown to the garrison, a strong reinforcement was coming to their aid. Captain Dalzell had left Niagara with twenty-two barges, bearing two hundred and eighty men, with several small cannon, with a fresh supply of provision and ammunition.

Coasting along the south shore of Lake Erie, they soon reached Presqu'Isle. Thence, proceeding on their voyage, they reached Sandusky on the 26th of July; and here they marched inland to

the neighbouring village of the Wyandots, which they burnt to the ground, at the same time destroying the corn, which this tribe, more provident than most of the others, had planted there in the spring. Dalzell then steered northward for the mouth of the Detroit, which he reached on the evening of the 28th, and cautiously ascended under cover of night.

On the morning of the 29th, the whole country around Detroit was covered by a sea of fog, the precursor of a hot and sultry day; but at sunrise, its surface began to heave and toss, and, parting at intervals, disclosed the dark and burnished surface of the river; then lightly rolling, fold upon fold, the mists melted rapidly away, the last remnant clinging sluggishly along the margins of the forests. Now, for the first time, the garrison could discern the approaching convoy. Still they remained in suspense, fearing lest it might have met the fate of the former detachment; but a salute from the fort was answered by a swivel from the boats, and at once all apprehension passed away. The convoy soon reached a point in the river midway between the villages of the Wyandots and the Pottawattamies. About a fortnight before, as we have seen, these capricious savages had made a treaty of peace, which they now thought fit to break, opening a hot fire upon the boats from either bank. It was answered by swivels and musketry; but before the short engagement was over, fifteen of the English were killed or wounded. This danger passed, boat after boat came in to shore, and landed its men

amid the cheers of the garrison. The detachment was composed of soldiers from the 55th and 80th Regiments, with twenty independent rangers, commanded by Major Rogers.

Scarcely were these arrangements made, when a great smoke was seen rising from the Wyandot village across the river, and the inhabitants, apparently in much consternation, were observed paddling down stream with their household utensils, and even their dogs. It was supposed that they had abandoned and burned their huts; but in truth, it was only an artifice of these Indians, who had set fire to some old canoes and other refuse piled in front of their village, after which the warriors, having concealed the women and children, returned and lay in ambush among the bushes, hoping to lure some of the English within reach of their guns. None of them, however, fell into the snare.

On the day of his arrival Captain Dalzell had a conference with Gladwyn, at the quarters of the latter, and strongly insisted that the time was come when an irrecoverable blow might be struck at Pontiac. He requested permission to march out on the following night, and attack the Indian camp. Gladwyn, better acquainted with the position of affairs, and perhaps more cautious by nature, was averse to the attempt; but Dalzell urged his request so strenuously that the commandant yielded to his representations, and gave a tardy consent.

Pontiac had recently removed his camp from its old position near the mouth of Parent's Creek, .

and was now posted several miles above, behind a great marsh, which protected the Indian huts from the cannon of the vessel. On the afternoon of the 30th, orders were issued and preparations made for the meditated attack. Through the inexcusable carelessness of some of the officers, the design became known to a few Canadians, the bad result of which will appear in the sequel.

About two o'clock on the morning of the 31st of July, the gates were thrown open in silence, and the detachment, two hundred and fifty in number, passed noiselessly out. They filed two deep along the road, while two large bateaux, each bearing a swivel on the bow, rowed up the river abreast of them. Lieutenant Brown led the advanced guard of twenty-five men; the centre was commanded by Captain Gray, and the rear by Captain Grant.

A mile and a half from the fort, Parent's Creek, ever since that night called Bloody Run, descended through a wild and rough hollow, and entered the Detroit amid a growth of rank grass and sedge. Only a few rods from its mouth, the road crossed it by a narrow wooden bridge, not existing at the present day. Just beyond this bridge, the land rose in abrupt ridges, parallel to the stream. Along their summits were rude entrenchments made by Pontiac to protect his camp, which had formerly occupied the ground immediately beyond. Here, too, were many piles of firewood belonging to the Canadians, besides strong picket fences, enclosing orchards and gardens connected with the neighbouring houses. Behind fences, wood-

piles, and entrenchments crouched an unknown number of Indian warriors with levelled guns. They lay silent as snakes, for now they could hear the distinct tramp of the approaching column.

The sky was overcast and the night exceedingly dark. As the English drew near the dangerous pass, they could discern the house of Meloche upon a rising ground to the left, while in front the bridge was dimly visible, and the ridges beyond it seemed like a wall of undistinguished blackness. They pushed rapidly forward, not wholly unsuspicious of danger. The advanced guard were half-way over the bridge, and the main body just entering upon it, when a horrible burst of yells rose in their front, and the Indian guns blazed forth in a general discharge. Half the advanced guard party were shot down; the appalled survivors shrank back aghast. The confusion reached even the main body, and the whole recoiled together; but Dalzell raised his clear voice above the din, advanced to the front, rallied the men, and led them forward to the attack. Again the Indians poured in their volley, and again the English hesitated; but Dalzell shouted from the van, and, in the madness of mingled rage and fear, they charged at a run across the bridge and up the heights beyond. Not an Indian was there to oppose them. In vain the furious soldiers sought their enemy behind fences and entrenchments. The active savages had fled; yet still their guns flashed thick through the gloom, and their war-cry rose with undiminished clamour. The English pushed forward amid the

pitchy darkness, quite ignorant of their way, and soon became involved in a maze of outhouses and enclosures. At every pause they made, the retiring enemy would gather to renew the attack, firing back hotly upon the front and flanks. To advance farther would be useless, and the only alternative was to withdraw and wait for daylight. Captain Grant, with his company, recrossed the bridge, and took his station on the road. The rest followed, a small party remaining to hold the enemy in check while the dead and wounded were placed on board the two bateaux, which had rowed up to the bridge during the action. This task was commenced amid a sharp fire from both sides; and before it was completed, heavy volleys were heard from the rear, where Captain Grant was stationed. A great force of Indians had fired upon him from the house of Meloche and the neighbouring orchards. Grant pushed up the hill, and drove them from the orchards at the point of the bayonet—drove them, also, from the house, and, entering the latter, found two Canadians within. These men told him that the Indians were bent on cutting off the English from the fort, and that they had gone in great numbers to occupy the houses which commanded the road below. It was now evident that instant retreat was necessary; and the command being issued to that effect, the men fell back into marching order, and slowly began their retrograde movement. Grant was now in the van, and Dalzell at the rear. Some of the Indians followed, keeping up a scattering and distant fire; and from

time to time the rear faced about, to throw back a volley of musketry at the pursuers. Having proceeded in this manner for half-a-mile, they reached a point where, close upon the right, were many barns and outhouses, with strong picket fences. Behind these, and in a newly dug cellar close at hand, lay concealed a great multitude of Indians. They suffered the advanced party to pass unmolested; but when the centre and rear came opposite their ambuscade, they raised a frightful yell, and poured a volley among them. The men had well-nigh fallen into a panic. The river ran close on their left, and the only avenue of escape lay along the road in front. Breaking their ranks, they crowded upon one another in blind eagerness to escape the storm of bullets; and but for the presence of Dalzell, the retreat would have been turned into a flight. "The enemy," writes an officer who was in the fight, "marked him for his extraordinary bravery;" and he had already received two severe wounds. Yet his exertions did not slacken for a moment. Some of the soldiers he rebuked, some he threatened, and some he beat with the flat of his sword; till at length order was partially restored, and the fire of the enemy returned with effect. Though it was near daybreak, the dawn was obscured by thick fog, and little could be seen of the Indians, except the incessant flashes of their guns amid the mist, while hundreds of voices, mingled in one appalling yell, confused the faculties of the men, and drowned the shout of command. The enemy had taken possession of a house, from the

windows of which they fired, down upon the English. Major Rogers, with some of his provincial rangers, burst the door with an axe, rushed in, and expelled them. Captain Gray was ordered to dislodge a large party from behind neighbouring fences. He charged them with his company, but fell, mortally wounded, in the attempt. They gave way, however; and now, the fire of the Indians being much diminished, the retreat was resumed. No sooner had the men faced about, than the savages came darting through the mist upon their flank and rear, cutting down stragglers, and scalping the fallen. At a little distance lay a sergeant of the 55th, helplessly wounded, raising himself on his hands, and gazing with a look of despair after his retiring comrades. The sight caught the eye of Dalzell. That gallant soldier, in the true spirit of heroism, ran out, amid the firing, to rescue the wounded man, when a shot struck him, and he fell dead. Few observed his fate, and none durst turn back to recover his body. The detachment pressed on, greatly harassed by the pursuing Indians. Their loss would have been much more severe, had not Major Rogers taken possession of another house, which commanded the road, and covered the retreat of the party.

In the meantime, Captain Grant, with his advanced party, had moved forward about half-a-mile, where he found some orchards and enclosures, by means of which he could maintain himself until the centre and rear should arrive. From this point he detached all the men he could

spare to occupy the houses below; and as soldiers soon began to come in from the rear, he was enabled to reinforce these detachments, until a complete line of communication was established with the fort, and the retreat effectually secured. Within an hour, the whole party had arrived, with the exception of Rogers and his men, who were quite unable to come off, being besieged, in the house of Campau, by full two hundred Indians. The two armed bateaux had gone down to the fort, laden with the dead and wounded. They now returned, and, in obedience to an order from Grant, proceeded up the river to a point opposite Campau's house, where they opened a fire of swivels, which swept the ground above and below it, and completely scattered the assailants. Rogers and his party now came out, and marched down the road, to unite themselves with Grant. The two bateaux accompanied them closely and, by a constant fire, restrained the Indians from making an attack.

Grant resumed his retreat as soon as Rogers had arrived, falling back from house to house, and joined in succession by the parties sent to garrison each. The Indians, in great numbers, stood whooping and yelling, at a vain distance, quite unable to make an attack, so well did Grant choose his positions, and so steadily and coolly conduct the retreat. About eight o'clock, after six hours of marching and combat, the detachment entered once more within the sheltering palisades of Detroit.

Day after day passed on; a few skirmishes'

took place, and a few men were killed, but nothing worthy of notice occurred, until the night of the 4th of September, at which time was achieved one of the most memorable feats which the chronicles of that day can boast.

The schooner *Gladwyn*, the smaller of the two armed vessels so often mentioned, had been sent down to Niagara with letters and dispatches. She was now returning, having on board Horst, her master, Jacobs, her mate, and a crew of ten men, all of whom were provincials, besides six Iroquois Indians, supposed to be friendly to the English. On the night of the 3rd, she entered the river Detroit; and in the morning the six Indians asked to be set on shore, a request which was foolishly granted. They disappeared in the woods, and probably reported to Pontiac's warriors the small numbers of the crew. The vessel stood up the river until nightfall, when, the wind failing, she was compelled to anchor about nine miles below the fort. The men on board watched with anxious vigilance; and as night came on, they listened to every sound which broke the stillness, from the strange cry of the nighthawk, wheeling round and round their heads, to the bark of the fox from the woods on shore. The night set in with darkness so complete, that at the distance of a few rods nothing could be discerned. Meantime, three hundred and fifty Indians, in their birch canoes, glided silently down with the current, and were close upon the vessel before they were seen. There was only time to fire a single cannon-shot among them, before they were beneath her bows, and

clambering up her sides, holding their knives clinched fast between their teeth. The crew gave them a close fire of musketry, without any effect; then, flinging down their guns, they seized the spears and hatchets with which they were all provided, and met the assailants with such furious energy and courage, that in the space of two or three minutes they had killed and wounded more than twice their own number. But the Indians were only checked for a moment. The master of the vessel was killed, several of the crew were disabled, and the assailants were leaping over the bulwarks, when Jacobs, the mate, called out to blow up the schooner. This desperate command saved her and her crew. Some Wyandots, who had gained the deck, caught the meaning of the words, and gave the alarm to their companions. Instantly every Indian leaped overboard in a panic, and all were seen diving and swimming off in all directions, to escape the threatened explosion. The schooner was cleared of her assailants, who did not dare to renew the attack; and on the following morning she sailed for the fort, which she reached without molestation.

It was now the end of September. The Indians, with unexampled pertinacity, had pressed the siege since the beginning of May; but at length their unwonted constancy began to fail. The tidings had reached them that Major Wilkins, with a strong force, was on his way to Detroit. They feared the consequences of an attack, especially as their ammunition was almost exhausted; and by this time most of them were inclined to sue for peace, as the easiest mode of

146 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

gaining safety for themselves, and at the same time lulling the English into security.

The Ottawas alone, animated by the indomitable spirit of Pontiac, refused to ask for peace, and still persisted in a course of petty hostilities. They fired at intervals on the English foraging parties, until, on the 30th of October, an unexpected blow was given to the hopes of their great chief. French messengers came to Detroit with a letter from M. Neyon, commandant of Fort Charters, the principal post in the Illinois country. This letter was one of those which, on demand of General Amherst, Neyon, with a very bad grace, had sent to the different Indian tribes. It assured Pontiac that he could expect no assistance from the French; that they and the English were now at peace, and regarded each other as brothers, and that the Indians had better abandon hostilities which would lead to no good result. The emotions of Pontiac at receiving this message may be conceived. His long-cherished hopes of assistance from the French were swept away at once, and he saw himself and his people thrown back upon their own slender resources. In rage and mortification, he left Detroit, and, with a number of his chiefs, repaired to the river Maumee, with the design of stirring up the Indians in that quarter, and renewing hostilities in the spring.

During the first few months of the siege, what news had filtered through to the garrison from the outside world had been tidings of disaster. The train fired by Pontiac had set the whole of the frontier in a blaze. Westward from Fort Niagara in the north to Fort Pitt (now the site of Pittsburg)

in the south, Detroit was the only fort that had successfully held out against the revolted tribes. Everywhere else in this vast region, forts, trading posts and settlements, had been overwhelmed by the tidal wave of barbarism, and their garrisons and inhabitants ruthlessly massacred.

It was many months before the British and colonial troops succeeded in stamping out the rebellion in the remoter districts. Punitive columns were sent out on various parts of the frontier, forts were captured, or where they had been destroyed by the Indians, rebuilt, and due punishment meted out to the offending tribes. It was not, however, until late in August—fifteen months after the beginning of the siege—that an army under Colonel Bradstreet finally relieved Detroit. Since their return in the spring the Indians had contented themselves with investing the fort: they had shown little of the energy that distinguished their conduct during the earlier siege.

Peace was made with the northern tribes; but Pontiac, still irreconcilable, fled westward to the Maumee, and attempted to rally the western tribes between that river and the Mississippi. The enterprise was only partly successful; Pontiac applied for aid to the French Governor of New Orleans, who, however, was unable to help him, and counselled him to make his peace with the British. After long hesitation, Pontiac at last tendered his submission to Sir William Johnson. Some years later he was treacherously killed near St. Louis by an Indian, instigated, it is said, by an English trader.

THE AMERICAN INVASION, 1812-13

THE war between England and her late colonies was one outcome of Napoleon's Continental System, by which all Continental ports were blockaded against English goods. His efforts to cripple England by ruining her trade were altogether unsuccessful, for his orders were disregarded in some countries, much smuggling was carried on, and an extensive carrying trade flooded France itself with English goods, brought in by ships flying neutral flags.

England's answer to the Berlin decrees were the Orders in Council by which all vessels bound for the blockaded ports were compelled to call at British ports under pain of seizure. The United States passed a Non-Intercourse Act in 1808, which suspended all trade with both France and England. In 1811, Napoleon and America amicably settled their commercial differences. But the English Government would consent to no compromise, and instead of making concessions, increased the difficulties by insisting on a "right of search" which compelled American vessels to surrender all British subjects found among their crews, who were assumed to be deserters from the English navy. The irritation caused by this, and the losses brought about by the cessation of trade, ended in a cry for war, in which, however, the New England states did not join, and to the prosecution of which they furnished neither men nor money. The other states forced Congress to raise twenty-five thousand men, and President Madison to declare war. Neither side was prepared for a struggle. England was

exhausted by the contest with Napoleon, and the Americans were without military training. When in 1812 England offered to withdraw her Orders in Council, it was too late to avert hostilities.

ON the 24th of June it became known at Quebec that Congress had declared war, so all American citizens were warned by the Government to quit the province by the 3rd of July. On the 30th of June a proclamation was issued imposing an embargo on all vessels in the harbour, and convening the legislature for the 16th of July. Parliament acted with the greatest liberality. A statute to legalize the issue of army bills to the amount of £250,000 was passed, in order to replenish the public exchequer; and an annual grant of £15,000 was made for five years, to pay whatever interest might accrue. On the 6th of July the whole militia of the province had been directed to hold themselves in readiness to be embodied, while the flank companies of the Montreal militia were formed into a battalion and armed.

Meanwhile, General Brock, in Upper Canada, had been busily employed in making preparations for the contest. He had considerable difficulties to encounter. There were but few troops in the province, and not sufficient muskets to arm the militia; while at the same time the Governor-general informed him that no aid need be looked for from England for some months.

No sooner had General Brock learned, on the 26th of June, that war had been declared by the United States, than he sent orders to Captain

150 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

Roberts, commandant of a military post at Lake Huron, to possess himself of Mackinac if possible; but if first attacked he was to defend himself to the last extremity, and then retreat upon St. Mary's, a station belonging to the North-west Company. By the 15th of July Roberts had prepared his little armament, consisting of forty-two regulars, three artillerymen, one hundred and sixty Canadian voyageurs, half of whom only were armed with muskets or fowling pieces, and two hundred and fifty Indians. On the following morning he embarked, and landed on the 17th near Mackinac, garrisoned by sixty regular soldiers under the command of Lieutenant Hancks. Roberts immediately summoned him to surrender, which was complied with after a few minutes' delay. Thus, at the very outset of the war, a most important post, commanding the entrance into Lake Michigan, was acquired without loss of blood.

Meanwhile General Hull, who had spent several months in organizing a force for the invasion of Western Canada, crossed over the Detroit river, on the 12th of July, with two thousand five hundred men, to Sandwich, where he planted the American standard, and published a most inflated proclamation, calling on the inhabitants to surrender. "He did not come to ask their assistance," he said; "he had a force which would beat down all opposition, and that force was but the vanguard of a much greater. The United States," he continued, "offer you peace, liberty, and security; your choice lies between these and

war, slavery, and destruction." Very few of the Canadians joined his standard, or accepted his offers of protection. On the 22nd of the same month, Brock issued a counter-proclamation at Fort George, in which he showed the odious alliance of the Americans with the despotic Napoleon, and taught the people the duty they owed to their country.

Eighteen miles from Hull's camp stood the village of Amherstburg, defended by Fort Malden, now unfit to stand a siege, so imperfect were the works, and garrisoned by three hundred regular troops, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel St. George. The surrounding country was difficult to traverse, and the river Canard, flowing a little distance behind the village, and falling into the Detroit river some three miles above it, offered a favourable position for checking the advance of an enemy. Off the mouth of the Canard lay the British sloop of war, *Queen Charlotte*, eighteen guns, which effectually prevented the advance of an armament by water.

On the 17th, Hull pushed forward a detachment towards Amherstburg to reconnoitre, which was speedily driven back by the few troops and Indians St. George had ambushed at the Canard. Next day the Americans, in greater numbers, attempted to force a passage, with no better success; and on the 20th they were a third time repulsed. On this occasion two hundred of their army, attempting to ford the river higher up, were put to inglorious flight by twenty-two Indians; many, in their hurry to escape, throwing away their

arms and accoutrements. Hull now began to be encumbered with wounded, and the vessel in which were the hospital stores of his army having been captured, his difficulties increased. In his rear Mackinac had fallen, while Colonel Proctor, who had been sent on by Brock with a small reinforcement, pushed a force across the river opposite Amherstburg, on the 5th of August, which routed two hundred and sixty of the enemy, captured a convoy of provisions, and effectually interrupted his communications with Ohio. Had Hull pushed forward at once after crossing the river, with resolution and skill, Amherstburg must have fallen. But the right time for action had been allowed to pass; the Indians were arriving in considerable numbers to aid the British, the militia also began to muster; and, worst of all, Brock was advancing from Toronto. On the 7th and 8th, Hull re-crossed the river with the whole of his army, except a garrison of two hundred and fifty men left in a small fort he had erected at Sandwich, and established himself at Detroit. From thence he dispatched a body of seven hundred men to re-open his communications with Ohio, a duty effected with heavy loss to themselves, while the British and their Indian allies, although compelled to retreat, suffered very little.

After a fatiguing journey by land and water, Brock arrived at Amherstburg on the night of the 13th, and met the Indians in council on the following morning.

In one of the recent skirmishes, Hull's dispatches to his Government had been captured.

These breathed so desponding a tone, and painted his position in such unfavourable colours, that Brock determined to attack him before he received succour, a course most amply justified by the result. By the 15th a battery was constructed on the bank of the river, opposite Detroit, and three guns and two howitzers placed in position, when Brock summoned Hull to surrender. He refused to comply, and the battery opened fire. Next morning the British, numbering in all seven hundred regulars and militia, and six hundred Indians, crossed the river three miles below the town. Forming his men in column, and throwing out the Indians to cover his flanks, General Brock advanced steadily towards the fort. When at the distance of a mile he halted to reconnoitre, and observing that little or no precautions for defence had been taken at the land side, resolved on an immediate assault. But Hull prevented this movement by capitulating; the garrison, with troops encamped in the vicinity, amounting together to two thousand five hundred men, surrendered to little more than half their number. With Detroit a large quantity of military stores and provisions were given up, and the territory of Michigan also surrendered on the simple condition that life and property should be respected. The American militia were permitted to return to their homes, while the regular troops and officers, over one thousand in number, were sent down to Quebec.

Thus disgracefully, on the part of the Americans, ended the first attempt to conquer Upper Canada.

154 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

Within the short space of five weeks Mackinac had fallen, Detroit had been captured, and the chief part of their army of invasion compelled to surrender; while their whole north-western frontier was left exposed to hostile incursions. The successes of British regular troops and militia, against a force so much their superior in numbers, had a most excellent effect in raising the spirits of the Canadian people, and securing the fidelity of the Indians.

On the same day that Detroit was surrendered, General Brock issued a proclamation to the inhabitants of Michigan, confirming them in the full enjoyment of their properties; and stating that the existing laws would continue in force until the pleasure of the Crown should be known. Having made such other arrangements as he deemed necessary, he returned to Toronto, where, on the 17th, he was received by the heartfelt acclamations of a grateful people. He would have followed up his success by an immediate attempt on Fort Niagara, but was prevented by his instructions from Sir George Prevost.

The home Government hitherto had been inclined to pursue a policy of forbearance towards America, under the supposition that, the Orders in Council having been repealed, the quarrel would soon be arranged. Aggressive measures, it was thought, would only tend to exasperate the Americans, widen the breach, and hinder the establishment of peace. In pursuance of this line of policy, Prevost had proposed, in the latter part of July, an armistice to the commander-in-

chief of the United States army, Major-General Dearborn, in the hope that existing differences might be speedily arranged. The latter agreed to this measure, excepting, however, Hull's army; but the American Secretary of War, General Armstrong, refused to ratify the armistice, presuming it originated in a sense of weakness and danger on the part of the British general.

The recent invasion of Canada had been based on the same principle of combined movement pursued by Amherst. Hull was to enter this country at Detroit, and Van Ransallaer at the Niagara river, while Dearborn assailed it by way of Lake Champlain and the Richelieu. In addition to the troops assembled at these points, the Americans had established military posts at various favourable positions along the frontier, whence harassing incursions were frequently made across the border, which inflicted serious injury upon the inhabitants. At Ogdensburg a considerable force was stationed, under Brigadier Brown, which seriously interrupted the communication between Kingston and Montreal. Lieutenant-colonel Lethbridge, commanding at Prescott, formed the design of capturing this position, and advanced across the river, on the 4th of October, under cover of the guns of his own fort. When about mid-channel the enemy opened a warm and well-directed fire upon the boats, which speedily compelled him to retreat, with a loss of three men killed and four wounded. On the 9th, an affair of more importance occurred at Fort Erie. An armed brig, as well as another

156 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

vessel laden with prisoners and furs, had arrived the preceding day, and was cut out just before dawn by a strong party of Americans. Both vessels drifted down the current of the Niagara river, and grounded near the opposite shore, where the crews, after a sharp contest, were made prisoners. During a fog a party of British from Fort Erie succeeded in boarding and dismantling the armed brig.

Owing to the infatuation of the home Government, who still confidently looked for the establishment of peace, and had no idea that the conquest of Canada was really desired by the Americans, the 103rd regiment and a weak battalion of the 1st or Royal Scots, with a few recruits, were the only assistance dispatched to Sir George Prevost up to this period. Matters had in the meantime assumed a more threatening appearance along the American frontier. Irritated rather than discouraged by the surrender of Hull, preparations by land and water were energetically pushed forward for the conquest of Upper Canada before the winter set in. General Harrison had collected a large army at the west to revenge the fall of Detroit, while Dearborn instructed Van Ransallaer to penetrate Brock's line of defence on the Niagara at Queenston, and establish himself permanently in the province. For this operation the force at his disposal was amply sufficient, the British regulars and militia collected for the defence of this entire frontier of thirty-six miles being under two thousand men. But owing to the exertions of Brock, who saw clearly the approaching

storm, these troops were in the best possible state of efficiency, and thoroughly on the alert.

During the 12th, Van Ransallaer completed his preparations for attacking Queenston. The following morning was cold and stormy, but nevertheless his troops embarked in boats at an early hour, and everything was made ready to push across the river with the first blush of dawn. These movements were soon discovered by the British sentries, who gave the alarm. Captain Dennis of the 49th, who commanded at Queenston, immediately collected two companies of his regiment and about one hundred of the militia at the landing-place to oppose the enemy, whom he held in check for a considerable time, aided by the fire of an eighteen-pounder in position on the heights above, and a masked gun about a mile lower down. A portion of the Americans, however, landed higher up, and ascending by an unguarded path, turned the British flank, captured the eighteen-pounder, and speedily compelled Dennis to retreat, after having sustained considerable loss, to the north end of the village. Here he was met by General Brock, who had heard the cannonade at Niagara and pushed forward in company with his aides-de-camp, Major Glegg and Colonel M'Donnell, to ascertain its cause. Having learned how matters stood, he dismounted from his horse, and, resolving to carry the heights, now fully in possession of the Americans, placed himself at the head of a company of the 49th, and, waving his sword, led them to the charge in double-quick time under a heavy fire from the enemy's riflemen.

158 THE GREAT FIGHT FOR CANADA

Ere long one of these singled out the general, took deliberate aim, fired, and the gallant Brock, without a word, sank down to rise no more. The 49th now raised a shout to "revenge the general:" regulars and militia madly rushed forward, and drove the enemy, despite their superior numbers, from the summit of the hill.

By this time the Americans had been strongly reinforced, and the British, who had never exceeded three hundred altogether, finding themselves nearly surrounded, were compelled to retire, having sustained a loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners, of about one hundred men, including several officers. They re-formed in front of the one-gun battery, already stated as being a mile below Queenston, to await the arrival of assistance. Van Ransallaer, therefore, made a solid lodgment on Canadian soil with nearly a thousand men, and after giving orders to form an entrenched camp, re-crossed the river to send over reinforcements. But the American militia, having now seen enough of hard fighting, were suddenly seized with conscientious scruples about going out of their own territory. Comparatively few crossed over to the assistance of their comrades beyond the river, who were thus left to shift for themselves. Early in the afternoon, a demonstration was made against the American position in the most gallant manner by young Brant, at the head of some fifty Mohawks. These, after a sharp skirmish, were compelled to retire, owing to the steady front presented by Colonel, afterwards General Scott, who had meanwhile arrived, and



THEY FOUND A CRYSTAL BALL

assumed the chief command, Wadsworth, a militia general on the field, waiving his right thereto.

But the British had no intention of surrendering Queenston so easily. Major-general Sheaffe, an American by birth, assumed the chief command on Brock's death, and having collected all the troops at Niagara and Chippewa, moved forward in admirable order to drive the enemy from their formidable position. His force, inclusive of one hundred Indians, was under one thousand men, of whom only five hundred and sixty were regulars, with two small guns. After making a long detour to the right, to gain the open ground in rear of the heights, Sheaffe began the attack by an advance of his left, which, after delivering a volley, charged with the bayonet, and drove in Scott's right. He then advanced his main body, and after a sharp conflict, a part of the enemy were driven back over the first ridge of heights to the road leading to the falls, while another portion let themselves down by the aid of the roots and bushes towards the river, hotly pursued by the Indians, who were with difficulty withdrawn.

Resistance was now out of the question, and the Americans, to the number of nine hundred and fifty regulars and militia, surrendered. So completely had they been scattered, that hardly three hundred men remained with Scott when he gave himself up.

Thus ended in total discomfiture the second attempt of the Americans to establish themselves permanently in Upper Canada. The British loss, in a numerical point of view, was comparatively

small, and did not, in killed and wounded, amount to one hundred men; but the death of gallant Brock dimmed the lustre of victory, and cast a gloom over the country. Descended from a respectable family in Guernsey, he had embraced the profession of arms at an early age, and served with distinction in some of the principal campaigns in Europe; among the rest at Copenhagen with Lord Nelson. As a civil governor he was firm, prudent, and just; as a soldier, brave, skilful, and humane, and the idol of his troops; while the Indians regarded him as their beau idéal of a gallant warrior. He fell at the early age of forty-two, just as his harvest-time of honour and distinction had begun, and his country had learned to regard his opening career with pride. He was respected by all classes—by friend and foe alike, and minute guns from the American as well as from the British batteries bore honourable testimony to his great personal worth, as he was buried at Fort George, on the 16th October, side by side with Colonel M'Donnell, in a grave watered with the tears of brave soldiers and sorrowing citizens. Brock's name has not been forgotten; the people of Canada West still cherish his memory, and while the current of the Niagara speeds past the scene of his death, he will occupy an honourable place in ~~the~~ **the pages of its history.**

